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# EXTRACTS

FROM

# ARMY LIFE

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BY

ALBERT O. MARSHALL.

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*PRESENTED WITH THE AUTHOR'S COMPLIMENTS.*















# ARMY LIFE.

## FROM A SOLDIER'S JOURNAL.

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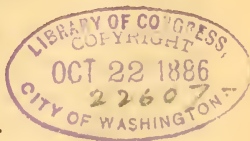
BY

ALBERT O. MARSHALL.

INCIDENTS, SKETCHES AND RECORD OF A UNION  
SOLDIER'S ARMY LIFE, IN CAMP AND FIELD;

1861-64.

SPECIAL EDITION.



PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

JOLIET, ILL.

1886

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## PREFACE.

Books are merely word pictures. The true artist makes the scene upon the canvas appear life-like and actual.

It has been truly said, that if the biography of any man, however humble his station, were written so truthful and complete as to display his whole inner and outer life, from the cradle to the grave, it would be immortal. To write such a biography is impossible. The writer, like the painter, only produces a likeness; neither creates the real.

Many histories of the late war have been written, a perusal of which calls to mind my own soldier life; and in reading of the brave deeds of many officers, as recorded, the thought has often occurred to me, that the simple story of the private soldier's actual army life would not be devoid of interest.

Turning occasionally to my army journal, after these many years, the sketches written from time to time by the light of the evening camp fires, appear to me, deeply interesting. They may, perhaps, be entertaining to others.

The preservation of the little memorandum books in which my army journal was written is al-

most miraculous. The knapsack in which they were carried, was often left behind on some forced march, or just before a battle. Other knapsacks were lost. But through all the varied changes, dangers and vicissitudes of three years of a soldier's life at the front, on the march, in bivouac and battle, this knapsack was never so mislaid or lost as not to bring along its little army journal. These memoranda are simply jottings, made rather as a pastime than with any thought of future use, or of their being of sufficient value to send home for safe keeping; an army blanket was then more highly prized and carefully guarded; yet with all the neglect and hazard attending its journey, this journal always returned and was at the muster out, or these pages could not have been presented.

No published histories nor public records have been consulted in compiling this volume. It contains only such matters as were, at the time, deemed of sufficient interest to be noted in my army journal.

In reviewing this army journal, I discover that many things written at the age of twenty appear crude and incomplete, twenty years thereafter. At this time I have sometimes felt inclined to erase the words of youthful enthusiasm, wild extravagance, or, perhaps, boyish foolishness, found therein. Such correction would, however, leave the picture less vivid, distinct and real. Hence, with but little change, or even verbal alterations, and omitting only such peculiar personal matters as no one need ask nor expect to see, the pages are presented as they were written twenty years ago.

When it is remembered that a majority of the pri-

vate soldiers were, at enlistment, between the ages of sixteen and twenty-three, it will be realized that a true picture of their soldier life must, of necessity, portray a youthful and immature one.

If my comrades of the great Union army, when reading these reminiscences are carried back, in memory, to the old camp fires and army scenes—if their friends in reading the story can, in imagination, see what the soldiers endured and what they accomplished, my object is attained. I have made no attempt to write a war, nor even a regimental history; but this little book is submitted for simply what it claims to be—A PICTURE OF A PRIVATE SOLDIER'S ARMY LIFE.

A. O. M.

JOLIET, ILL., 1883.

# ARMY LIFE.

FROM A SOLDIER'S JOURNAL.

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## CHAPTER I.

### LEAVING HOME.

THE eleventh day of September, during the eventful year of 1861, found me riding at railroad speed down the Chicago and Alton road, on my way from my Will county home, to Camp Butler at Springfield, Illinois, where I was to join the army, shoulder a musket, and go forth to the bloody fields of battle to fight for the grand cause of Country and Liberty.

I will not attempt to portray the varied emotions I felt upon this, to me, long to be remembered day. Such emotions as any young man must feel when leaving the dearest of home associations, the kindest of friendly relations, the most cherished and valued school privileges; leaving all of these for the first time, and that, too, not as fond anticipation had often promised, to mingle in the common contests of active life, but for the uncertain, desperate battle field, by and by to return, perhaps—perhaps not. Attempting to throw the veil of forgetfulness over these memories I will let this journal recount other thoughts and scenes.

The day was bright and beautiful; one of the fairest of early Autumn. The journey passed swiftly and pleasantly.

#### FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE THIRTY-THIRD.

I had decided to join the Thirty-third Illinois (Normal) Regiment. At Bloomington two intelligent and accomplished ladies joined the passengers for Springfield. I was much pleased to learn that they were acquainted with the Normal Regiment, to which, in fact, they were on the way to make a visit. One was the wife of Colonel Hovey of the Thirty-third and the other a sister of a young man, lately from the Normal school, and now orderly sergeant of the company I intended to join. With one exception they were the first members of the Normal Regiment—which they were in spirit and interest, if not in fact—I had ever met.

If the regiment sustains even a small part of the good impression created in its favor by this first meeting with any of its members, it will prove to be one of the best regiments that Illinois or any State can send to the field.

We arrived at Springfield at sundown. Jumping into a carriage I was soon in Camp Butler and the camp of the Thirty-third shown to me. I then found Company A and was furnished with soldier quarters for the night.

#### FIRST NIGHT IN CAMP—YOUNG SOLDIERS ON GUARD.

I lay down with the soldiers, but sleep was out of

the question. Of all the strange and queer racket and sound ever heard, none could exceed the unearthly clamor made by a large number of young volunteers during the first few nights they are in camp. One soldier near my tent kept up a continual yell, of, as I thought, "corporal-of-the-guard-want-something-to-eat." This early evidence of starvation in camp raised rather dubious suggestions when I thought of our future prospects. As he continued to yell louder and louder, instead of ceasing, at last I became vexed, as I supposed he was only yelling for fun, and was about ready to go out and try the virtue of throwing a brick at his head, merely as a gentle hint for him to cease such unreasonable midnight howling, when one of the boys in our tent, Charley Huston, *an old soldier*—he had been in the army three full weeks—informed me that the soldier was on guard and was only trying to utter the simple call of, "corporal of the guard No. 17," which meant that he wanted such officer to come to his post for some reason or other. Thus it appeared that the soldier was only doing his duty and not merely yelling nonsense as I had supposed. How he had been able to give such a plain call the sound I first heard I am unable to understand.

Although the commotion appeared to subside a little as night advanced, yet it seemed to be only so that it could become more dismal and hideous. Thus the night's confusion continued with all the wild and weird variations possible until the early *reveille* of the next morning called up those thousands of enthusiastic young soldiers, who soon transformed the hideous, fantastic scene of a dark, foggy night camp,



into a grand and bewildering sea of life, action and labor. Thus passed my first night in camp.

#### THE NORMAL REGIMENT.

The original idea of having the Normal Regiment contain only young men of literary aspirations and habits, had not been insisted upon as strictly as at first had been intended. And yet, the regiment contained many who had left schools and colleges to join the army; many who well deserved the name of "Student soldiers of Illinois." Taken altogether, the regiment appears to well deserve the honor of carrying through the war the name, Normal Regiment, and being thus identified with that favorite school of the Prairie State, the Normal University.

My first acquaintances were among Company A. Of course, I was more interested in them than in others, as they were to be my immediate associates and comrades for the next three years. Among them were quite a number of students from the Normal University—and a noble class of young men they were—some from other colleges, others were school teachers, and quite a large number had come from the best class of farmer boys, who were, many of them, equal, if not superior, in intelligence and all soldierly qualities, to their college comrades.

Many good people would regret to see so many bright and promising young men rushing to meet the deadly exposure of camp life and the battle field. It is indeed, a sad, a terrible thought. Still if it proves to be the will of Heaven that they should fall,



why should friends at home mourn? If they were to live for ages, when could they again have an opportunity to give their lives to support and uphold a nobler, a better cause? In these trying days how often has the thought been repeated in thousands of earnest hearts: If I have not my loved country to live in, I have nothing to live for. If this is to be its end, let it also be mine. Such a cause thus supported, thus maintained, must be right and in the end must surely win.

#### SWORN IN.

I was sworn into the service on the fourteenth day of September. Only four others were sworn in at the same time. The medical examination was skipped in my case. The doctor simply bowed to me pleasantly and said: "I guess you will make a good soldier." The company had been mustered and fully organized before I joined it. All the officers had been elected, commissioned and appointed, and every thing was in working order.

I was somewhat amused to see the reluctance with which our officers, at my direction, inserted the word "farmer" instead of "student" in the column of the muster-rolls headed "occupation." They were anxious to have all who had left universities to join the army entered on the rolls as "students." But being a farmer boy I preferred to enlist as one.

#### MY FIRST SABBATH IN CAMP.

Sunday, the fifteenth, was my first Sabbath in camp.

There was not any religious services in our regiment, so I sought relief from the long, dull hours by visiting, reading and writing letters home. As if to remind us of the holiness of the day, which seemed to have been almost forgotten, one of our regiment was called from among us to meet his Maker. This was the second death in the regiment.

#### A FULL DRESSED SOLDIER.

On Monday I drew my uniform and soon was in full soldier trim. Got a very good, well fitting suit of clothes. Felt quite soldier-like. From what prouder position could a young man of this noble country desire to commence active life, than that of a free American soldier? And should he die in this cause, every good Christian will admit that he ought to go right straight to Heaven.

#### MARCHING ORDERS—HURRAH!

On Tuesday, September seventeenth, in answer to the sudden call, "Fall in," our company was immediately assembled together. We were then informed that we were likely to soon move to the front, and ordered to be ready to march at an hour's notice. "Hurrah! Hurrah, boys!! Hurrah!!!" What a yell rang and echoed and re-echoed through the camp and woods, until the staunch old oaks themselves seemed to have caught the inspiration and vibrated with the wild enthusiasm. The boys threw their hats high in the air, ran, jumped, tumbled, hallooed and yelled until they were hoarse and exhausted. In fact I never saw boys or

men so wild, so enthusiastic, so delighted as those of the Thirty-third were when the order came for them to leave Camp Butler and start for the seat of war. All the afternoon every thing and every one was in the greatest commotion. The strange excitement and enthusiasm continued at the highest pitch. And such excitement, such enthusiasm! It seemed in fact as though each and every one was a powerful electric battery charged to the full and overflowing with the electricity, created by the wild enthusiasm of that hour. It appeared as though they thought that the greatest events of a thousand eventful years had been combined and condensed into one brief moment of time, and the victory of them all given to the boys of the Thirty-third in those brief commands: "To the front," "Prepare for active service."

## LEARNING TO USE THE KNAPSACK, ETC.

Our knapsacks, haversacks and canteens were issued to us at once. Many funny scenes occurred as the young soldier boys were trying to understand the new, and to them, curious soldier trappings. Each commenced trying to solve the unknown mystery at once. Most of the soldiers could, at first sight, understand the use for which the different articles were designed, but the more awkward ones made some laughable blunders. The canteens being simply a round tin water flask with flat sides and a strap attached to carry it by, so plainly showed for what it was intended that all could understand its use at once, except a few of those odd fellows who never understand anything, and who were laughed at for the way

in which they explained their supposed powder-horns. This was the only mistake made with the canteens, unless the enthusiastic indorsement of one soldier could be called a mistake, who, when he received his canteen, earnestly embraced it and spontaneously exclaimed, "What a neat and convenient thing to carry a drop of whisky in to have in case of accident."

The knapsacks with their different parts, pockets, and straps, puzzled them more. The haversacks being simply a canvas bag with a strap attached long enough to go over the shoulders, were so plain and simple that they could, as they erroneously supposed, understand its use at once. By the time a single blanket was crowded into it, the haversack, never intended for such purpose, was full and running over, and the perplexed and bewildered soldier would look with blank astonishment and comical dismay at the large pile of necessary blankets and clothing for which he had no room. By this time the more dexterous ones had solved the mystery of their knapsacks and with them fully packed were trying them in position on their backs. Upon looking at the more ingenious ones, the unhappy and confused soldiers began to see where they were wrong, and soon understood that the haversacks they had been trying to use as a bag for their blankets and clothing was only designed for a dinner bag. With the help of their more efficient comrades the awkward soldiers learned how to pack their knapsacks. In this way even the dullest volunteer was set right as to the different and proper uses of the knapsack, haversack and canteen, and we were soon pronounced to be all in marching order.

## GOING—BUT WHERE TO? STRIKING TENTS.

Although we have received orders to be ready to march at an hour's notice, we do not know when we will start nor whither we are to go. Some try to guess, but it is no use. Already every place from Washington to Texas has been mentioned. The only thing we seem to be certain about is, that we are going somewhere.

The next day we completed our arrangements for leaving Camp Butler. Many of the soldiers had clothing, books, etc., which they could not take with them. Such things were disposed of in different ways; some were given or thrown away; some, Yankee like, traded off; and others sent to friends at home. Every thing being ready we impatiently waited for marching orders.

At five o'clock in the afternoon the welcome, anxiously-waited-for order came: "Strike tents." No sooner said than done. Even now the laugh went round at the expense of two or three wildly enthusiastic, awkward ones who, this being the first time they had heard this command, had taken the order exactly as given and with the nearest clubs at hand were hastening to vigorously perform their share of "striking tents." Our zealous friends soon learned that to "strike tents" did not mean, like "whipping carpets," to vigorously pound them with a stick, but to take them down. A thousand willing hands seized the tents, took them down, rolled them up and loaded them on the wagons and we were ready to start.

It was now generally understood that we had been



ordered to Washington. We marched out to our last parade at Camp Butler. Colonel Hovey was absent from camp. He was in the city of Springfield arranging for our departure. Major Roe on horseback was in command of the regiment. He made a few happy remarks which were enthusiastically cheered by the command. We marched from the camp to the public road, and supposed that we were now fairly on the way; but just as we were starting for the railroad depot we were ordered to stop a few minutes. The few minutes ran into hours. It turned out that we had to stay waiting on the roadside all night expecting every moment to start forward. Waiting for what? Waiting, as we afterward learned, for Uncle Sam to make up his mind where he wished to send us. Colonel Hovey and our other officers, so it was understood, were anxious to cast their fortunes and the future of the regiment with the Western army and not with that of the East. Finally the order for us to go to Washington, in response to much telegraphing, was countermanded and we were sent to Missouri.

#### FIRST MARCH.

After lying upon the roadside all night we got up at an early hour and returned to our old camp, where we took an early breakfast and then marched to Jintown, the nearest railroad station.

Our first march, although a short one, only two and a half miles, was to us a hard one. Lying as we did by the roadside all night, expecting every moment to be called into line to go to the supposed waiting rail-

road train, with little chance to sleep or keep warm during all the long hours of a chilly September night, did not have a tendency to put us in an extra good marching trim. Besides this, we were all heavily overloaded. Each was carrying about as heavy a load as he could lift. And then our knapsacks, the awkward things, would not set right; or rather perhaps we did not know how to make them do so; something was wrong. Going in this condition, by the time our little march was ended, many of the young and unseasoned soldiers were completely exhausted. This, it must be confessed, was rather a poor beginning for soldiers who had such high expectations of the great wonders they were to accomplish when opportunity offered.

#### JIMTOWN.

We took the cars at Jimtown; such at least was given as the name of the place where we took the cars when leaving Camp Butler. The city—if it is ever to be one—at the time we were there consisted, according to my recollection, of quite a number of substantial, erect and well preserved white oak stumps, one corn crib and a small house upon the side of one of the hills.

#### ON THE ROAD FROM SPRINGFIELD TO ST. LOUIS.

The train was waiting for us. Embarking took but a short time. The sight of the snorting railroad engine waiting to start us on our journey to some more war-like lands, seemed to bring back the enthu-

siasm of the previous day. Every one was revived as if by magic and at once forgot the weariness caused by our first march. All were soon on the cars, the tents and everything loaded, all ready, and away we went.

We had a very pleasant ride over the grand prairies of Illinois, down to Alton and thence along the river to St. Louis. The sympathy and earnest good will extended to us by the noble-hearted, loyal and true people of Illinois, whose free and happy homes we were so rapidly passing, was unbounded. At every city, village and farm house the citizens and inmates, men, women and children, all would come out to cheer us on our way and bid us an earnest, heartfelt "God bless you." From Springfield to St. Louis our route was lined with flying flags and waving handkerchiefs. It seemed as though all the people were our own, well known neighbors and friends.

The neatest, best part, was to see the pretty girls, the blooming maidens, the farmer's daughters as they came tripping across the fields to wish us—many of us hoped that it might not prove to be the last—timid yet earnest "good-by." Perhaps there is more truth than would at first appear in the spontaneous words of one soldier, who could not help exclaiming: "If every man in the United States was a farmer's daughter, there would not be any rebels for us to fight." Most certain it is that, if all hearts were as loyal and true as those that beat within the breasts of the kind and noble daughters of our Illinois farmers, there would not be any bloody, treason-stained hands in the land.



At Alton we stopped a short time. This delay gave the soldiers an opportunity to buy a fresh supply of fruit, cakes, pies, etc. It was strongly suspected that a few had something stronger than "cold coffee" in their canteens, which they insisted was what they had purchased. A peculiar kind of cold coffee no doubt. One which, the colder it was, the hotter it became. Its use was not general. One intoxicated man was all I saw in our entire regiment. (This was, please remember, before we had learned to be old soldiers. At that time it was thought to be very wrong for a soldier to get drunk.)

When we first arrived at Alton we expected to take a steamboat and sail down the river to St. Louis. As the boat which was to take us would not be ready to start for several hours, it having part of a cargo to unload, it was decided that we should continue by rail. This was quite a disappointment to the soldiers, especially those, of whom there were many, who had never had a steamboat ride. We were soon under way again and arrived at Illinoistown on the Mississippi river, opposite St. Louis, at night. As it was now too late to cross over the river, we took up quarters in the railroad station houses, where we passed the night quite comfortably.

The next morning we went aboard the steamboat Louisiana and crossed over to St. Louis. This little trip somewhat reconciled the boys to the loss of yesterday's anticipated ride. Although it was a short one, not quite two miles in length, still it will bear the name of a steamboat ride, and by many of us will long be remembered, not only as our first steamboat

ride, but also as the first time we were ever upon the waters of the grand old Mississippi river.

#### FROM ST. LOUIS TO PILOT KNOB.

We stopped in St. Louis only long enough to unload from the steamboat and re-load on the railroad cars. As our freight consisted only of camp equipage and a small supply of rations, the work of transferring was soon done and we were ready to start forward. The sharp railroad whistles sounded, Colonel Hovey acting as railroad conductor for our train, cried, "All aboard," and we were on our way for Pilot Knob.

Through that part of Missouri which we passed the people seemed to be loyal at heart and cheered us with nearly the same hearty enthusiasm as that which greeted us in Illinois. If we had not known the fact, we would not, from what we saw, have believed that we were traveling in a slave State.

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## CHAPTER II.

#### AT PILOT KNOB.

It was late at night when we arrived at Pilot Knob, too late to pitch tents, so we spread them on the ground for a bed and slept upon them with nothing over us except the starry sky during our first night in Missouri. "Pitch tents," does not, like "pitching quoits," mean to throw them as far as you can but, to

erect them. In the army the order is, "pitch tents," when they are to be put up, and "strike tents" when they are to be taken down.

We found the Seventh Nebraska, the Twenty-first Illinois Infantry and part of the Seventh Indiana Cavalry at Pilot Knob. They talked mysteriously of unknown bands of rebels being in force at various surrounding points and in threatening proximity. They appeared anxious upon one point at least, that it should be understood that they were doing very important duty in a military point of view.

To judge by the talk of volunteers who have for the first time found themselves within fifty miles of an armed enemy, one would think that all the great issues of the entire war depended upon their valor. Of course we soon learned to do our part in this line. But a few weeks had passed before every circle in camp was nightly enlivened by the recital of the important and eventful exploits that some of our young heroes had performed. Every scouting expedition of even two miles distance multiplied the numbers of wondrous deeds accomplished. He was a poor soldier, indeed, who could not at least add his one little story to the countless number nightly recounted. It was estimated by the more prudent and wise ones, that our regiment had, to say the least, already done enough to make its name historic.

The Twenty-first Illinois put on airs because their first colonel, an officer by the name of Grant, was acting as a brigadier-general and in command of a small force at Cairo.

## ON PILOT KNOB.

We arrived at Pilot Knob at a late hour on Friday, September twentieth. As we were not to move on Saturday, the noted mountain of iron, Pilot Knob, from which the village received its name, claimed our first attention. Every one was anxious to climb over its iron sides and surmount its highest point. Permission was granted and we started forward in high glee. In a short time that gigantic mountain of iron was a grand sight to behold. It was completely covered with curious and impetuous soldiers. Upon every point and crag they could be seen, clambering, laughing and racing until they swarmed upon the topmost peaks. As they gathered at the top they could be seen swinging their hats high in the air as they gave cheer after cheer for the Union, for the flag and for the country we all love so well, until the stern old iron mountain seemed itself to reply with redoubled echoes. To see those earnest young men thus faithfully remembering their country and their country's flag in the midst of the enjoyment caused by their first visit to a place they had so often read about in their school-boy days, was enough to warm the coldest heart to the highest enthusiasm.

## OUR GUNS.

The time granted for us to visit the mountain expired, and we returned to our camp at the village. Upon arriving there we were called into line and marched to the quartermaster's quarters and he issued our guns to us. Colonel Hovey had procured them at

the arsenal in St. Louis when we came through. There was no time to issue them to us then, so they were brought down on the cars in the same trains with us in the boxes as received. It seems strange soldiering this. A lot of green country boys, undrilled, undisciplined and without a single weapon in their hands, with no training as to how to use them if they had, going as it were into the very face of an armed enemy in such a destitute and helpless condition. Thus it was our war commenced.

The guns we drew were muskets of a European make, said to be some of those purchased for our Government by General Fremont. The boys were very much disappointed. They had expected to get some of the best rifles in use. They had enlisted with the understanding that this regiment was to be armed with the Enfield rifles, or better, if better were to be had. It was to be the crack regiment of the State, you know. Every regiment organized was formed upon the idea that *it* was without fail to be number one, the especial favorite and pride of the Union army.

Expecting to get the best rifles and then to get a musket—and such a musket! Phew! A musket that needed the services of a skillful engineer to run it successfully. To load one of them: commence by taking a cartridge out of the cartridge-box, tear off the end of it and pour the powder down in the gun, then place the ball in after the powder; now go for the long iron ramrod, which must be pulled out of its pocket, inserted in the mouth of the gun, and with it drive the ball down upon the powder; then take out the ramrod and return it to its own pocket. At this stage



of the proceeding, with a decent gun, a percussion cap would be taken from its box, the hammer of the gun raised, and the cap placed upon the gun tube, but these guns do not go off with a simple little percussion cap such as we are acquainted with. No, indeed. First, the hammer must be raised and then a little trap door must be opened, then a funny little primer about two thirds of an inch in length with a pretty little wire string attached, must be taken from its box and inserted "just so" in a cunning little pocket, and then the amusing little trap door must be carefully closed down over it, and thus go through all of this elaborate ceremony before the gun can be loaded. These guns must be intended for soldiers who go out and fire one shot and then return leisurely to camp and go back the next day to fire the second volley. But they are so cunning. Yes, just as cunning as a little red wagon and probably about as dangerous. They are a smooth bore gun and the charge contains one ball and three buck shot. They are good for nothing except at short range, and even at that but little better than a common shot gun and much more complicated and unhandy. In every respect except for use as a club, where their weight would be available, a double barrelled shot gun would be far more desirable. These guns were a poor apology for those the members of our regiment had expected; the promised rifles with which they could pick off a rebel with perfect ease at a distance of nine hundred yards.

#### AN ACCIDENT.

This morning, Saturday, a serious accident occurred

in the Seventh Nebraska. A lieutenant was carelessly handling his revolver when it went off and wounded two men, one quite badly through the leg and the other mortally. The latter died during the day and was buried this evening. Such carelessness as this ought to be severely punished.

#### CAMP HOVEY

Our chaplain not having arrived, our first Sabbath in Missouri was passed without any religious services being held in our regiment.

On Monday we moved and established a permanent camp. Our new camp lay between Ironton and Arcadia, two little villages near Pilot Knob. It was named Camp Hovey. It was upon dry ground, shaded with some fine old oaks, and upon the whole a very pleasant place. Just beyond our camp was a commanding hill upon which the trees were being cut preparatory to building a fort. The boys went to work earnestly, and soon had made a fine army camp.

It would surprise any one not acquainted with the inexhaustible resources and utility of Yankee ingenuity, to see how soon apparently useless pieces of boards and planks and even the broken remains of deserted secesh buildings were transformed into articles of convenience and utility. Tent floors, bunks, tables, writing desks, seats, etc., were made with surprising rapidity and skill. Three hours after our tents were pitched our camp presented the appearance and contained all of the conveniences of an old and well arranged camp. The easy-going people of Missouri

were surprised and astonished. "Why," they exclaimed, "if these men stay here six months they could build a big city." They had never before seen men work in earnest.

#### GOOD WATER.

One of the best things of this country is the quality and abundance of good water. Flowing springs pour forth their streams of cool and clear water from every mountain side. The springs are unnumbered and their supply of good water is inexhaustible. Good water is necessary to preserve the health of an army. The bad water of Camp Butler no doubt did much to impair the health of the soldiers camped there. Unhealthy water frequently destroys more soldiers than the enemy's bullets. A commander who would allow his soldiers to use bad water when good can be had without fighting too hard, ought to be drummed out of the service.

#### A SUICIDE.

Shortly after we were established in our new quarters at Camp Hovey, fourteen men came from Illinois and joined our company. Some of them were new members who had lately enlisted, and others those who could not come with us when we left Camp Butler. They brought us the sad news that Henry Johnson, a fine, intelligent young man who had been left in the hospital at Camp Butler, had committed suicide by drowning himself in the small lake at that place. This sad information seemed too incredible



for belief. I saw and had a talk with him just before we came away and he appeared to be in good spirits. He said that he was gaining nicely and would be with us in a few days. When I expressed my regret that he could not go with us he replied in a happy, lively manner and laughingly anticipated the pleasant time he would have going down to Missouri in a nice, comfortable passenger coach, while we would have to go in crowded freight cars. In these rushing times passenger cars for the transportation of soldiers had to be extemporized out of freight cars. Some new, discouraging memories and thoughts must have occurred to the young soldier after we came away or he would never have sacrificed his life so vainly. With a big war on hand and his command going to the front, it would seem that a soldier would know that he could have lots of good chances of being killed and to die in an honorable and useful way, and that he need not commit suicide. Young Johnson left a short note bidding his friends good-bye and telling them that he was "going to the happy land above." Poor boy! Let us pity although we may not understand him.

#### BUILDING A FORT.

The early building of a fort upon the hill near our camp was deemed a pressing and important matter. The work was placed in charge of Colonel Hovey, who took hold of it in earnest. He examined the plans and estimated the work to be done. He then appealed to the members of his regiment; mentioned the importance of the work, the desire and necessity

that it should be done immediately; explained that it must be done either voluntarily or by regular detail. He would prefer to work with us as volunteers rather than otherwise; would the Thirty-third volunteer to do the work and have the honor of building the fort, instead of assisting others to build it as detailed soldiers? The boys of the regiment most willingly assented, and to work we went. An additional inducement was given by a promise of twenty-five cents per day in addition to our regular pay as soldiers. Those who worked as mechanics to have forty cents per day. All of us who could use an ax, saw or hammer, were put down on the list as mechanics. Eight hours to be credited a day's work. Every hour more than that to be credited as double time. Thus twelve hours' work in one day would be credited as two days' work. We usually put in the full twelve hours. Thus many of us were earning eighty cents per day extra. Trustworthy sergeants were appointed to keep these *important time tables* with strict impartiality and military exactness. The boys jokingly called this promised extra pay "boat money," a name derived from the case of the always insolvent man who was continually bargaining for the purchase of a farm which he would pay for "when his boat came in." (Of course nothing was ever paid upon these carefully kept accounts.)

The work was pushed forward with the utmost rapidity. Officers and men all worked together. In this work all rank is ignored. The best workmen were our recognized leaders. The timber in the woods near at hand was freely used. Large trees were cut

and the logs hauled to the fort and placed in the walls.

By the time the week ended the walls of the fort were so well established and the work in such a state of progress, that the chaplain of our regiment who had now arrived, thought that the fort ought to have some sort of a dedication, so he obtained permission and held religious services in it on Sunday.

As seemed proper and appropriate the fort was named after the colonel of our regiment and called Fort Hovey.

#### COLONEL HOVEY AND THE WORKMAN

One day while the work on the fort was being carried on with its accustomed vigor, Colonel Hovey, as was usual with him, was around among the boys to see how the work progressed, lending a helping hand now and then as he saw occasion. Among others, he came across a man who was working with considerable difficulty by reason of not having the proper tools to use. The man did not recognize the Colonel, who was dressed in a plain way, and looked, it must be confessed, more like a common soldier than like what we would expect to see in the person of the commander of the famous Normal Regiment. Colonel Hovey noticed this workman a moment and then asked: "Could you not do that work better if you had a good hand-saw to use?" "Why, yes," said the man; "I believe that I could. Say, old chap, won't you go over to the tool house and get one for me?" The Colonel trudged off to the tool house, nearly a quarter of a mile distant, and promptly returned with

a hand-saw. The workman praised him for his promptness and continued his work. The Colonel stood looking on and soon again suggested: "I should think that you could do that better if you had a good ax to use." "Yes, I never thought of that; won't you run over to the other side of the fort and see if you can find one for me?" Colonel Hovey went as before and soon returned with the desired tool. His apt suggestions and willingness had completely won the workingman's good will. "Well, old hoss," said he, in his warmest, friendliest manner, "you are a mighty handy chap, and if you will come around and see me this evening I will go with you to headquarters and have you assigned to help me as a carpenter, and you will then get better wages than you do now as a common laborer."

At this time, seeing that some of those who knew him were beginning to notice the interesting interview, Colonel Hovey passed to some other part of the work. The honest workman's astonishment, when informed who his "handy chap" actually was, can be well imagined.

#### SOLDIER DYING.

One evening after our work for the day was done, our jovial little comrade, Elisha Burrows, was seen walking down toward the officers' quarters. His face, always the picture of mirth and fun, was now covered with sadness. He had just come from his tent. Corporal Lewis was one of his tent mates. Lewis, one of our best soldiers, was a general favorite, and especially so with Lieutenant Burnham,

one of the warmest hearted and most sympathetic men in the army.

As Burrows came near Lieutenant Burnham his face grew more sad and in mournful tones he asked: "Lieutenant, did you hear about Corporal Lewis?" In his quick, impulsive way the Lieutenant answered: "No, what is the matter with him?" With a voice trembling with emotion Burrows slowly replied: "He is now in his tent *dyeing*." With tears of heartfelt sorrow and sympathy coursing down his cheeks, Burnham rushed to the soldier's tent, exclaiming: "Poor Lewis!" "Poor Lewis!" and found him—sitting before a glass dyeing his new-grown mustache.

#### OLD SECESH AND HIS FIG.

Although we were quite well supplied with provisions by the Government, some of the boys would persist in having a relish for the many little nicknacks which the farms and larders of Missouri furnished and not included in the army rations. No doubt they were in error in their belief, yet some of the boys were actually foolish enough to affirm, and the extreme ones even to go so far as to really believe, that fat chickens and plump pigs were good to eat even in the army. Whether or not any of them ever attempted actual proof is another question. As a general thing our soldiers were, in those early days of the war, very generous and exact in respecting the Union citizen's right of property, but woe to him who was known to be a secesh sympathizer. Although military rules and orders would not allow anything



to be disturbed unless properly and formally confiscated, yet the soldiers' ingenuity enabled them in many ways to show their respect to rebel sympathizers.

One of the wealthiest men living in the vicinity of Arcadia was of this stripe. One day this rebel sympathizer when passing through the woods near camp saw one of his fattest shoats fall down not far from him, it having met with a severe accident in the shape of a ball from an unseen gun. The Missourians allow their hogs to run at large in the woods, and he was no doubt slipping slyly around to see that nothing happened to his pigs. There being no hunter in sight to claim the game, and being unable to find from what part of the thick brush the shot was fired, the owner picked up his pig, a good sized one, and started home.

He was soon met by a soldier without any gun. "Goodness," the soldier said, "are you foolish enough to tire yourself out carrying that fat pig home when all you have to do is to go to Colonel Hovey who will not only make the rascals who shot it carry it home and dress it nicely for you, but also punish them severely in the bargain?" "Yes," he replied, "but how will he know who shot the pig?" "Oh, that is easy enough. He keeps a list of all the boys out of camp. He can spot the lads for you." This plan tickled old secesh hugely. The idea that he could go to camp and then come back marching proudly at the head of the despised Yankee soldiers, who would have to do the drudgery of lugging the pig to his house and perform the dirty work of scraping and cleaning

it, with him in command to see the work well and thoroughly done, and then to send them back to camp to remain with ball and chain in the guard-house, while he, old importance himself, was at home eating his fresh meat, was too great a temptation for him to withstand. He quickly assented to the plan. The friendly soldier kindly helped him to place the pig in a nice shady place where it would safely remain until the owner's anticipated, victorious return. The old cove then went briskly into camp to find Colonel Hovey.

The sequel can be easily imagined when we add that the pig was soon transferred and keeping company with an unloaded gun, which the kind soldier had hid before volunteering his unselfish and valuable advice.

Suffice it to say that Colonel Hovey impatiently listened to the complaint, more than half intimated that he doubted its truth, and then sent some men to investigate.

When the owner got to the place and looked for the dead pig, to his great astonishment there was no pig there, and the officers returned and reported old secesh to Colonel Hovey as an old fraud.

That day at supper a fine piece of fresh pork steak was furnished the Colonel. As he finished it with much relish he said to his cook: "How did you get this, Sam?" "Selled eggs and byed it," said Sam. As it was not dignified for a great man like the commander of the Thirty-third to have an extended confab with his cook the Colonel finished his supper in peace. But it is said he shortly afterward sent to the

owner of the lost pig and bought two of his best—the value was not large—and *forgot* to ever send for one of them; in this way paying for the confiscated pig.

#### WARLIKE TIMES.

While the work on the fort was being pushed forward with the utmost rapidity, many other things claimed our attention. We were in many ways made to appreciate the fact that armed forces of the enemy were within threatening distance of us. Countless wild and exaggerated rumors were circulated day and night. Among them were some stubborn facts.

A squad of men went to Arcadia and took two prisoners and 22,000 secesh gun-caps. The men protested that they were true Union men and that the rebel who was trying to take the ammunition through our lines to the enemy was another fellow who could not be found. They were given the benefit of the doubt and discharged and the gun-caps confiscated.

Two negroes were brought in by our picket guard. They claimed to have been connected with the rebel army as servants, from which they had escaped and come to the Union army. They were taken to headquarters and freely gave all the information of the enemy they could.

Three companies of our regiment, E, B and K, were, as soon as they had received their guns, after our arrival at Pilot Knob, sent back toward St. Louis to guard the railroad bridges. They were the first of our command to get into trouble. Quite a large force of the enemy had been hovering around us. Not being bold enough to attack the Union troops



in the vicinity of Pilot Knob they had passed up between us and the Mississippi River and then thrown a force around in our rear to destroy the bridges on the railroad and thus cut us off from communication with St. Louis.

They were too strong for the small force we had at those places and our soldiers were soon driven away and the bridges burned. Those of our troops nearest to us made their way back to Pilot Knob; those nearest to St. Louis fell back toward that city, and Captain Elliott and his company (E) were captured.

Captain Lippincott had command of those that fell back to Pilot Knob. When he and the men of Company K came in and we were told of the fighting they had seen, we began to appreciate what it was to be in a warlike country. Captain Lippincott received much credit for the able manner in which he saved his little force from being captured by the large band of rebels by which they were surrounded.

Two men of Company C went outside our lines to hunt in the woods and were captured by some straggling band of the enemy.

Our cavalry now began to get in their work in feeling of the enemy. They were sent out in every direction and met roving bands of rebels almost every day. These small forces when found were easily driven by our men. When the neighborhood of the main rebel army was reached, our cavalry would have to skip back. Our cavalry scouts soon learned so that they could tell as soon as they saw a rebel picket whether or not it was supported by a large force. If it was, the rebels would only fall back on their supporting guard and show

fight. If it was only a part of a detached force they would go pell-mell over the hills and out of reach, and it would be as impossible to get a second sight of them as it would be to get a second shot at a flock of wild turkeys.

#### JUST BEFORE THE BATTLE.

It will be remembered that we did not get our guns until the twenty-second of September. The next day we moved and established a new camp, and then went to work building the fort. Soon threatening movements of the enemy near us admonished our officers that the new soldiers needed some training in the use of their guns. On the twenty-eighth we commenced drilling in the manual of arms. From this time, all of the leisure moments that could be taken from other duties were spent in drilling. With building forts, drilling and watching rebels, the last of September and first of October, 1861, were very busy times with us.

Toward the last of October all of our available force was called into line and we started out fully expecting to meet the enemy near at hand. After going a short distance a halt was called, and in a short time a march back to camp ordered. Two or three days afterward the same movements with the same expectations of a battle were repeated.

On the fifteenth of October it seemed that the so often expected engagement would certainly take place. News from our cavalry told us that they were being driven back toward camp. It was believed that the enemy were moving upon us with their entire force.

At four o'clock we started out on the Fredericktown road to meet them. We did not expect to go more than one or at most two miles before being obliged to select a battle ground. Instead of this we went seven miles without seeing any rebels, but we met our returning cavalry. They had met some of Jeff Thompson's forces with whom they had quite a severe brush. Our men were repulsed but they succeeded in bringing off their wounded. From the cavalry it was learned that the enemy were in force at or near Fredericktown. We now halted and a council of war was held by our commanding officers. After a session of two or three hours it was decided that we should return to our quarters at Pilot Knob and Iron-ton and wait for future arrangements. So we turned and marched back again.

It was upon this march that Lieutenant Burnham, who for a short time had command of our company, gave the order which afforded considerable amusement and came near making him famous. While we were descending a steep hill, for some reason the front of the column stopped which made it necessary for us to halt. Burnham, like the rest of us, was new in military life, and in the confusion of the moment the proper command "Halt!" escaped his memory, and thus in its place in thundering tones upon the night air came the command: "Mark time!" The idea of stopping upon a sharp march to a supposed battle field, with the enemy perhaps within hearing distance, to go through the idle ceremony of "marking time," which is to take up one foot after the other in succession and replace it in the same place was so absurd that

the entire company caught the spirit of the joke and obeyed the command. And there stood Company A, in battle array, upon a steep hill in sight of their comrades and the enemy near, vigorously "marking time" until one of his brother officers suggested the right word, when Burnham stopped the interesting ceremony by the command "Halt."

Other troops had followed us to Pilot Knob so that we now had quite a respectable force at this point. Among the new arrivals was the Thirty-eighth Illinois, Colonel Carlin commanding. By some means his commission had been issued so that it bore a prior date to the one held by Colonel Hovey, which made him the senior and commanding officer of the army at this point. This led to considerable unpleasant feeling, but nothing serious grew out of it. The Thirty-third having been organized so as to take the earliest number, it did not seem just right that it should be outranked by the Thirty-eighth. Our soldiers being volunteers took a deep interest in these matters. For a time excitement ran high. At one time Colonel Carlin for some trifling reason put Colonel Hovey under arrest. That is he went so far as to order Hovey to consider himself under arrest. This continued for a few days. The lively times the surrounding rebels were now giving us claimed our undivided attention, and other reasons served to smooth over the misunderstanding for the time being, but it can be safely said that Carlin and Hovey never became very loving to each other so long as they remained in the same command.

## BATTLE OF FREDERICKTOWN.

It now became known that Jeff Thompson was fast concentrating an army of considerable force in the neighborhood of Fredericktown, and between us and the Mississippi River. This large force of the enemy and its position made an attack upon us more than probable. It seemed certain. All military rules demanded it. The bridges between us and St. Louis had been burned. The enemy had successfully thrown himself between us and the only Union troops within supporting distance. The situation of affairs demanded that General Thompson should attack us, and do it at once. We expected it. Orders were given for us to keep our guns loaded and ready for use. We "slept on arms" every night. We were frequently called out expecting an immediate battle.

At last, however, it became certain that Thompson would not attack us in the strong position we held. His movements were strange, indeed. To occupy the position he did required great bravery, if not absolute recklessness. To remain where he was inactive, was at once both dangerous and silly. He should have immediately come on and made an attack upon the forces at Pilot Knob before reinforcement could have reached them, or else have promptly retired to a safe position. His delay gave time for communication to be made with the Union forces upon the Mississippi River. A force large enough to compete with Thompson, under command of Colonel Plummer, had crossed the river from Illinois, and coming northwest from Cape Giardue were within easy striking distance of the rebels. Another force from Cairo had



crossed to Bird's Point. It was easy to be seen that Thompson's entire force could easily be captured. The boys were now in high spirits. Soldiers in the ranks talk of and study military points almost as much as the officers in command. By going to the southeast from Pilot Knob and having the force from Bird's Point move to the northeast and then let the Union troops from Cape Giardue come up and strike him from the east, Jeff Thompson would not only have been defeated but would also have been cut off from all chance of escape.

Such was the condition of affairs when the forces at Pilot Knob, with Colonel Carlin in command, started out to join in the attack upon the enemy under General Thompson, who had now concentrated his entire force at Fredericktown. We were aware of the fact that the Union troops under Colonel Plummer were on the way and within striking distance of the rebel army.

On the twenty-first of October the troops came up and a sharp brisk battle was fought in which Thompson was quickly and severely defeated. Most of the fighting on the Union side was done by the soldiers under Colonel Plummer. As he outranked Colonel Carlin he was the ranking officer of the united command. Plummer's own soldiers did most of the fighting. Most of the Pilot Knob forces, however, participated in the battle; some of them in the thickest of it. Company A was on the skirmish line. The balance of the Thirty-third was held in reserve at first, but they were so anxious to go in that they were permitted to do so. The fight was, however, so soon over that they only came up in time to fire one volley



at the retreating rebels. It was a short, sharp and decisive contest. As I was confined in the camp hospital at Iron-ton, during this time, with a severe attack of typhoid fever, I will not attempt to give incidents of the contest.

Instead of falling to the south of the enemy as they could easily and safely have done, the troops from Pilot Knob had kept to the north so as to form a junction with the troops under Colonel Plummer. This left an open road for Thompson to the south, and with his defeated army he retreated in hot haste toward the Arkansas state line. In war if you are sure to defeat the enemy strike so as to cut off his retreat and make the victory complete.

Although the enemy's entire force was not captured as it ought to have been, still the battle of Fredericktown was in many respects a very important one. It gave us undisputed possession of all of Southeastern Missouri and was the first battle of the war that could be claimed as a decided Union victory.

The loss upon the Union side was small. That of the rebels comparatively large. It is claimed that our soldiers buried over 200 of the rebel dead, left by them upon the field. The enemy's severest loss was that of Colonel Lowe, who was second to General Thompson in command of the rebel forces. He was one of the most promising young officers in the rebel army. He was killed in the early part of the battle. His death had a very depressing effect upon the rebels of Southern Missouri and Northern Arkansas, where before the war, he was well known as a brilliant, promising and popular young lawyer.

plied with much the best artillery, and whenever we can get two or three good batteries into play upon them the rebels always skip out of reach. Rebels do not like cannon balls.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### BATTLE OF CACHE RIVER.

THE early morn of a summer day, as the light began to break in the eastern sky on Monday morning, July 7, 1862, found us camped on the west side of Cache River. Work was commenced at an early hour and our pontoon bridge was soon thrown over the river. The army immediately commenced crossing. Our guards had been thrown some little distance ahead, but we were not troubled by the enemy. Our effective artillery work of the previous night had taught them to keep at a safe distance.

At eleven o'clock four companies of the Thirty-third Illinois and four of the Eleventh Wisconsin, with one piece of light artillery, belonging to a cavalry regiment, all under command of Colonel Hovey, went forward to see what the enemy in front of us were doing.

With a skirmish line in advance, we went forward on a rapid walk. Nothing occurred until we had marched about seven miles. Here we came upon a rebel picket so suddenly that they were obliged to take to the woods, leaving their guns and other traps upon

the ground. At the point where this picket guard had been posted another road crossed the one we were upon at right angles. This picket post was to our left as we advanced or upon the north side of our road. They disappeared in the woods in front of us, keeping to our left. Believing that they had gone to join the command to which they belonged, we were confident that the main force of the enemy was in the woods directly in our front.

Upon the south side of our road and just beyond the cross road was an old frame house. It was unplastered and the side boards were so loose and cracked that a person inside could easily look out upon the road in front. Some of our men made a hasty search of this house, but failed to find any rebels. It afterward proved that a rebel officer was at the time secreted in one of the rooms up stairs. He had been aided by the good, honest woman of the house who earnestly assured our men, "upon the word of a pious Christian woman," that there had not been any rebels at her house and none in sight. In reply to a question she asserted that the men who had run into the woods, as we came up, were only a small hunting party who had stopped by the road to make some coffee. While no reliance was placed upon her earnest statements it was not thought worth while to leave any guard to watch the house or her. As soon as our men withdrew, she of course promptly notified the rebel officer up stairs.

About three quarters of a mile in front of us were very heavy woods, thick with underbrush. We were sure the rebels were in these woods waiting for

us. We would go and see them. Without a moment's delay we pushed forward, our entire force passing in front of the frame house. The rebel officer in one of the upper rooms, with the woman below acting as his sentinel, peeked through a convenient hole and saw and counted our entire force. We had by actual count three hundred and eighty-two men all told. It is understood that the observing rebel's report to his commanding officer was "not quite four hundred men." This shows that he was reasonably accurate.

Passing rapidly by the house and the partly cleared field we soon reached the heavy woods where we expected to find the rebels. We did not find them. We did, however, find two negroes who had been hiding in the thick brush. They were frightened almost to death. As soon as we came near enough so that they were sure we were Yankee soldiers, they ran toward us exclaiming: "Lord a-golly, massy! Big Lord bless you'uns! We's mighty glad to see you'uns! Don't shoot! Oh! Lord a-massy; look out! I'se afeared of dem big guns. Don't, don't let 'em big mouths come dis way. Swallow up dis darkey sure." They were quieted with the assurance that they should not be harmed and their excited exclamations cut short with the questions: "Are there any rebel soldiers near here." "Oh, Lord-a-mighty, bless you, lots of 'em. Woods chuck full of 'em. More dan hundred thousand. Oh, d'ey eat you all up sure, sure as you live d'ey will, massy! All the woods full of 'em." "Are they in these woods?"—Jumping five feet high in terror at the bare thought.—"In dese woods! Lord a save you, no; dese darkies nebber

hids in dese woods if de rebs be here—Dead darkey sure—Woods full of 'em, eat you'uns all up sure, sure as you live a minute, you'uns all dead men sure. Sure as you live you is ! Dis darkey dead, too ! Oh, golly save us ; let dis darkey take to the woods ! Dey be here mortal minuts sure ! Dis darkey must go !” Of course all this took place in much less time than it can be written. By a few questions we learned that the rebel force, whatever it was, was not far from us. By looking in the direction their hands most eloquently pointed, we could easily see the deep woods in which the rebels were undoubtedly covered. That these poor frightened negroes, who all their lives had been the slaves of their rebel masters, told us the truth, we did not for a moment doubt. We can always depend upon the colored folks to tell us the truth about the rebels.

It was now plain that if we wanted to find the enemy the place to go was to retrace our steps nearly a mile to the frame house we had passed, then take the cross-road leading into the woods lying off to the south of the road by which we had come.

In the meantime the rebel officer secreted in the house when we passed it had not been idle. Having carefully noted our strength as we passed, he hastened to rejoin the rebels massed in heavy force in the woods near at hand. Here was a glorious opportunity—for them. A force of Union troops of less than four hundred men had gone past and left off to their right a rebel force of more than as many thousand nicely hid in the thick woods and not two miles distant from the road the Union troops had taken. No more of the



Union army was within hearing distance. A cavalry guard could easily be thrown in that direction to give warning if danger arose. All they had to do was to come up rapidly, turn in our rear, and slaughter our little force. Of course they at once resolved to do it. A band of rebel cavalry was sent through the woods toward the road by which we had advanced to watch and give warning if reinforcements should be coming to us. Their main force was put in shape to march up and capture us.

By this time unknown to them, we were rapidly upon our way to meet them. The rebels had not calculated upon our finding some negroes in the woods, and thus becoming posted as to their position. They expected to give us a complete surprise by coming up in our rear. They calculated, and with good reason, that by coming up in our rear we would believe that it was some of our own troops and that they could fall upon and slaughter us with a single volley. We had been warned in time, but none too soon. With a rapid march we had hastened back to the road crossing. Here we left two companies of the Eleventh Wisconsin as a reserve guard. The rest of our little force started south to enter the woods where we knew the rebels were. The two other companies of the Wisconsin regiment were placed in front as skirmishers. The four little companies of the Thirty-third followed in solid column. What an army column, hardly two hundred strong! With this force we went into the thick woods to meet an enemy of unknown strength. Of course it was not for a moment supposed that we would meet an enemy that would stand and make



a stubborn contest. Our daily experience in the past had been that when found, the enemy would fire only one volley and then seek safety by rapid flight into the depths of the wild woods. Colonel Hovey, always ready and ever anxious for a fight, had so little hopes of anything but a deserted rebel camp being found that he started leisurely to ride back toward the main army at Cache River to give the information that the road was open. Ere he had gone far his quick ear caught the first sound of clashing arms, and dashing the spurs into his steed with headlong speed he returned to his little command and joined in the wild conflict that was then raging, as we shall presently see.

Our rapid march had brought us back so that we turned toward them by the time the rebels had fairly started for us. Discovering our approach they quickly adopted another plan. Their strong advance in solid line of battle was hid by lying close upon the ground well covered by fallen logs and thick underbrush. In this way they expected to lie concealed until we were within reach when they would rise up and sweep us off at the first fire. Back of them, further out of sight, was a heavy body of mounted men who were to rush in at the proper time and complete the slaughter. That a slaughter was their design was plainly shown. Had they simply wished to capture us, able as they were to surround us with such an overwhelming force, they could, and by all rules of civilized war ought to at once have sent in a flag of truce, informed us of their large force, advised us of our real condition and demanded our immediate sur-

render. Their action showed that it was not a capture but a slaughter they desired. But their last well laid plan, like the first, was doomed to fail.

We advanced in column and without any line of battle, having in front only a line of skirmishers. Our keen-eyed skirmishers, many of whom had been successful hunters in the wild woods of Wisconsin, were too quick for the hiding rebels. Profiting by our repeated experience in the woods of Arkansas with the rebels who at first sight would shoot and run away, our established rule had become to fire at the enemy as soon as we got near enough. Some of our skirmishers soon saw the heads of the prostrated and hidden rebels and commenced firing at them. Now the wild music commenced. Seeing that they were discovered the entire rebel line rose up and fired a terrific volley at our skirmishers. The distance was so great that their poor guns did no serious damage, while the powerful rifles in the hands of our men told with deadly effect upon the enemy. But it was only our skirmish line of a few men engaged. They had no time to re-load their guns and fire a second shot. Many of the rebels had double-barreled shotguns and thus each had a charge still in reserve. Their heavy support on horseback had started rapidly forward at the first shot. Now the entire rebel force, cavalry and infantry, came forward upon a fierce run. Wisconsin's little band of skirmishers had to skip back at a lively rate. They were now out of the fight. Our time had come. Company A was in the advance. The ground upon which we stood was some higher than that over which the rebels were

advancing. Standing at the brow of the hill our one little steel gun had commenced a lively play upon the advancing rebels. As our skirmishers came back on the run we barely had time for part of the company to turn into line in support of the cannon and face the enemy when they were upon us. They came upon a fearful charge and with but little attention to military order. The heavy lines of the enemy's infantry breaking up to let through a more dense mass on horseback. In this way they were right upon us before they saw our line. Now a terrific clash of arms followed. Here we were but a few yards apart. Into the dense throng our trusty rifles were fired with fearful effect. They replied with a volley that made the timber roar and the ground tremble. Lead enough went screeching over our heads to have swept off an entire army. In front of our few guns, horses, horsemen and footmen were falling to the ground. In front of theirs our men stood unharmed. Hardly a man upon our side was hit by this first volley. We were standing waiting for them. They were surprised to meet us face to face when they supposed that our entire line was upon the run to the rear. In the thick woods numbers could not be accurately estimated, and our little line of skirmishers had given the advancing enemy such a warm reception that they believed our entire force was in the advance line and had been driven back, and the rebels rushed madly on, never dreaming of the stubborn resistance they were yet to meet. In surprised confusion they fired wildly. Standing as we did upon higher ground also

helped to save us. In firing they aimed too high. A few feet above our heads the trees were almost swept clean by the leaden balls fired above us. Leaves and twigs and limbs severed from the trees by the leaden storm dropped upon us like hail. Had the rebel guns been aimed so as to have sent the bullets five or ten feet lower none of us would have been left alive to tell the tale of our defeat. Their lines wavered and trembled at the fearful punishment they received, but the force of the heavy mass coming so swiftly impelled them on, on into our very midst. Fortunately their guns, like ours, had been fired and were now unloaded. But close at hand fast rushing upon us, were still other heavy forces of the enemy with lead in their guns.

Let no one suppose that Company A, a mere handful of men, stood there in formal army line, with these hosts of fresh rebels coming up to shoot at us, while we went through all of the motions of reloading our empty guns. No, indeed! Plenty of good trees to get behind were too near at hand. But ere we fell back there was a little work to do. As soon as it became certain that we must fall back, the first thought was to save the little steel cannon. The driver swung his team into place, the gun was hooked on the caisson, the gunners scampered back under cover of the woods, and yet, oh, misery! there stood our little cannon. The soldier heart always bleeds to see a flag or a piece of artillery fall into the enemy's hands. At the first jump of the team, the quick start had thrown the cannon from its fastenings. The bold driver was wounded and could not at once bring his horses to a stand. In the midst of the fierce storm raging about us, Cap-

tain Potter coolly said: "Steady, boys; save the gun." Sergeant Ed Pike, of our company, ran up and grabbed hold of the cannon with one hand, his own rifle in the other, and with the strength of a giant and the assistance of one comrade ran the cannon down the road, hooked it on the caisson, and the team galloped to the rear and saved the gun. The rebels were all around. The nearest horseman was almost close enough to have struck Pike with his saber. The rebels were, however, completely dashed by the supreme audacity of the movement. Half a dozen of us, the tallest members of the company, and thus thrown near to Pike, our orderly sergeant, were all that were near enough to witness the strange scene. A strange scene, indeed! With one false step, or the loss of a single second of time, it would have been a tragedy. With our heavy guns in hand we were ready to aid our brave comrade, if we could, had the rebels raised their sabers to strike, but, it may be confessed, we had no desire to enter into a clubbing fight with unloaded guns unless compelled to do so. As soon as the cannon was hitched to the caisson and saved by the galloping team, we made lively time to join our comrades in finding good places and friendly trees behind which we could stop and reload our rifles. As I dodged under a limb it caught my cap and it fell to the ground behind me. Pike had saved a cannon. A pretty story it would be if I could not save a little army cap. Without scarcely any thought other than the appearance of coming out of the fight bare-headed I turned back for the cap. The faces of the rebels who had witnessed our audacious actions in taking the steel



gun from their very teeth were covered with amazement. They looked as though they were in doubt whether we were really fighting or only engaged as two parties in some huge play. As I looked up with the recovered cap in hand, and the real situation began to appear to me, while overwhelmed with astonishment, I could not help returning the surprised smiles of the nearest rebels and then scampered back right lively to find my tree. It was more thoughtlessness than any thing else that caused me to save my cap from such a place. As I was reloading behind a good, stout tree, and began to fully realize the situation, a thousand miserable army caps could have lain there at their leisure and I would have gone bare-headed twenty years before I would have run into the teeth of that rebel host to get one of them.

All of this had hardly taken more than a second of time. Upon occasions like this, actions and events are swifter than passing time. The terrific rebel volley had answered our fire; almost at a single jump Pike had taken the gun to its place; and into the woods we went hardly a pace behind the rest of our company. At this point the woods were, fortunately, so thick with underbrush that two rods distance completely hid us from our foes.

And still on came the crowding mass of anxious rebels who had not yet fired a gun. We had not been a moment too soon. Company A had barely time to scamper into the thick woods to our left, when this seething, rushing horde of fresh rebels came up, passed the ground where we had stood, and fell upon the three other companies of the Thirty-third. Each had turned partly into line. There had been no time to change



from column into line by battalion. The scene our company met a moment before was now re-enacted. Steadily, coolly and with deadly aim the large rifle balls were sent into the dense rebel ranks. The effect was too terrible. Flesh and blood could not stand it. Brave men though they were, the rebel lines wavered, halted and then rushed back in wild dismay.

By the time this desperate charge was over we had ceased to pay any great attention to mere company lines. Officers and men all fought together. About the only indication of rank was the fact that wherever our lines were the thickest an officer would generally be seen in the midst of them. Scattered through the deep woods, only watching that we kept in the general line of the Union soldiers, we sought such shelter as we could, and rapidly loaded our rifles and fired at the best mark we could see. Thus the rebels withdrew, suffering at every step until they were out of reach of our long range rifles.

Do not think that this retreat of the enemy was the end of the battle of Cache River. We thought so for a brief moment. Colonel Hovey, who had now reached the front, said to his orderly: "Report to camp that one officer and two men are severely wounded and that we want a surgeon immediately." He was standing near me when he said this and evidently had as little thought of a renewal of the attack as any of us. More from a soldierly spirit, than from any thought of necessity, our lines had been somewhat re-formed by the soldiers changing places and getting nearer to their own officers and company comrades. But a brief moment was, however, allowed for this. Before formal

lines could be planned, much less made, we were clearly advised of our error in believing the battle ended. So soon that it seemed but an echo of the departing cry we had so lately and with so much satisfaction heard, the returning rebel yell, rapidly coming nearer and nearer, told us that all was not yet over. Their cavalry guard had informed the rebels that no reinforcements were yet at hand to rescue the little band of Union soldiers. For a large army, thousands in number, to be baffled by a few hundred, and that, too, out in the open woods with no protecting works, was something the hot Southern blood could not endure. Rushing among them, with information of how contemptible we were in numbers, appealing to the pride of boasted Southern chivalry, sneering in words of contempt at the plow boys of the North, the rebel officers at once rallied their men for another charge. On they came more fierce than before, blowing monstrous horns, pounding kettles, beating drums, screeching the harsh, shrill rebel yell. What possessed them? Did they think to scare the soldiers by whom they had been so severely punished a few minutes before by mere noise? So it seemed. With the most dismal racket that all of these things could make, added to by the less weird but more dangerous flash of rebel guns, the furious, overwhelming force was thrown upon us with all the insane zeal of maddened fury. This second charge took a more deadly and continued form than the first. As they came, in this headlong career, our trusty rifles were emptied into the dense mass with fearful results. Our deadly fire broke the rebel charge but they could not themselves fully stay

the force of the onward rush. The fierce advance of the enemy carried many of them far beyond where our soldiers stood.

Now our guns as fast as loaded could be used upon rebels in our rear as well as in front. Rebels before us, rebels behind us, rebels each side of us, rebels, rebels everywhere. The enormous mass of rebels was strong enough to crush our ranks; to pass through and trample them down and to have captured or slaughtered us if they could have found our army lines—but we had none. Wherever the enemy were too thick to be driven back we would run in both directions and thus open a way for them to pass through while we looked for the protecting side of other trees. Noble trees they were. Many of them had firmly stood there loyal and sound to the core, since Washington's day. In a battle a good tree is often a soldier's bosom friend. Perhaps instead of recording that over five thousand Confederates fiercely fought less than four hundred Yankee boys we should count five or ten thousand trees as in line upon the Union side and thus in numbers make the contest equal. True it is that those staunch Arkansas trees right royally gave the strength of their side to the cause of loyalty upon that day, and in after years—far, far away—after this story is all forgotten, when those trees become brown and leafless with age and decay, and the woodman's ax lays them low, in the hearts of those old oak trees that stood for the grand old Union flag when misguided sons of the South would tear it down, will be found many a leaden ball which has rested there since that eventful day, when they stood within the fierce contest of July 7, 1862.

The fierce, unequal contest was raging still. Each of us was now virtually fighting upon his own hook. Each selected the best protection he could while loading his rifle and then sought for the largest band of rebels he could see to fire into. All of our officers did well their part, but all they could do was by example, and each officer was fighting side by side with the soldiers. Colonel Hovey went in on foot with the rest. During the most desperate part of the contest, as they were reloading their rifles, some of our soldiers raised a shout and laugh on seeing Colonel Hovey popping away toward the enemy with a little pocket revolver. A pop-gun would have been fully as dangerous at the distance he was attempting to shoot. "Boys," said he, "shooting is all that will do any good in this fight, you are doing better work than I." Soon, however, he borrowed a rifle from a wounded soldier, who was crawling to the rear, and from that time on he went right in with the soldiers wherever the fight was thickest, now and then borrowing a handful of cartridges from the cartridge box of the nearest soldier, and thus continued until the last gun was fired. All of our officers did the same, and long before the battle ended every officer in those woods, who was not himself wounded, had the rifle of some disabled soldier.

A charge of nearly spent small balls from a shotgun or musket struck Colonel Hovey in the breast. He stopped a moment, examined the wounds, picked out some of the balls that were buried in his flesh; said: "This does not amount to much," and paid no further attention to his wounds until the fight was over.

A round bullet hole, as it was supposed, was noticed in Colonel Lippincott's felt hat. "A pretty close call, Colonel," some one remarked. "Oh, no," said Lippincott, with cool indifference, as the rebel bullets were whistling past his head, "I cut these holes this morning for the purpose of ventilation in this hot weather." He was too brave a man to be willing to accept any undue credit.

This second charge was soon broken by our accurate, telling fire. In a spasmodic form it continued. The fight became continuous. Heavy forces of the enemy were in front of us; some upon our flank, and often many were, by their fierce ride, carried through to our rear. It was fighting all around. Every few minutes a desperate band of rebel cavalry would rush upon us. During one of these fierce charges a powerful rebel, upon a superb horse, came dashing through our lines at the head of his band. The first man he reached was Sergeant Dutton of our company. Dutton had just fired and was reloading his rifle. Seeing his advantage the athletic rebel drew his heavy saber and with a cry of desperate rage went fiercely on to strike and ride the Union soldier down. None of our boys within reach had at that critical moment a loaded gun so as to fire and save Dutton from his threatened doom, and besides, just about this time each of us had about a dozen rebels of his own to attend to and was kept mighty busy dodging out of reach of rebel balls while putting each fresh load in our rifles. Being just then near a fence which blocked his retreat, with an open space of ground in front of him, giving the rider an unobstructed way, no escape



seemed possible and Dutton's doom seemed at hand. Just as the fatal blow was about to fall, the little sergeant whipped a revolver from his belt, without moving a single step, and fired. The uplifted hand fell helpless, the bold rider dropped dead to the ground, and the riderless horse passed on through our lines and out of sight to our rear. Had Dutton's wonderful nerve for a second wavered, had he even given a single glance to look for a way of escape he would have been a dead man, and perhaps the result of the battle changed. Like incidents could be told of each soldier who stood in those woods at that hour. With the fearful odds against us the part of each was important, and had one failed, disaster to all would have been the result. Dismayed at the loss of their impetuous leader and terrified by seeing so many of their number fall from their saddles by the certain aim of the Union rifles, this band of rebel horsemen, like others, disappeared, only to be followed by others as desperate and reckless as those who had gone before.

The only military command I heard during that long contest after the battle was under way, was given by Captain Potter. A number of us were near him. He had been wounded, and with a handkerchief tied around his bleeding leg to stop the rapid flow of blood, as a little lull in the fierce storm occurred, he gave what was probably the only command given during those two desperate hours, in these words: "Boys, I believe that we can get some good shots over there," pointing to a clump of trees nearer to the rebels who were firing upon us. We advanced, and with the rifle he had been using for a cane, he came hobbling along after us.



Thus for two long hours this fearful contest continued. And only four small companies of the Thirty-third Regiment, with hardly fifty men each to meet the desperate onslaught. True, a like number of the Eleventh Wisconsin were with us, and right useful they were. Two companies, it will be remembered, were left at the road crossing. The other two companies upon the skirmish line, at the beginning of the battle, had been so hotly pressed that each man had all he could do to save himself. The companies upon the road formed in line. As the skirmishers came back they joined them. Our little cannon, after being saved from the enemy, had also gone back and taken place in the line. There was not much opportunity to use the cannon, but now and then, when our boys were clear from the road, a solid shot or shell would be sent through to greet the rebel hosts. Now and then some of the Illinois boys being entirely cut off from their comrades would run through the wood or field to the rear and form in line with the Wisconsin boys. Thus when the enemy came with such fierce force that we could not stay their headlong course but were compelled to fall to the right or left and let the heaviest columns through, as they passed by and looked down the road and saw the solid line still in front, raked as they were by the ceaseless side fire we were pouring upon them, they would in dismay rapidly pass off in the open woods to our right leaving us at liberty to turn and give our undivided attention to other rebels still advancing in our front. Standing there without a wavering man in their lines, that little band of Wisconsin men was of untold help to us. If

Colonel Hovey left them there during all this time by design, it was a happy thought. If the fighting was so hot that he had no chance to send an order for them to advance, it was a most fortunate accident. Had the many rebels who, at different times, passed our lines in their mad career, been permitted unmolested to reform and reload and open fire in our rear, no protecting trees could have caught all of the rebel bullets, and we would have been swept off in a few brief moments.

A plan of the battle field would show the advantages which aided us in this desperate contest. Supposing that the main road we had advanced upon in the morning, was running east, that upon which the battle was fought would be running south. At the crossing of the two roads our reserve had been stationed. On the left of the cross road going south toward the enemy was a field connected with the frame farm house referred to, and all enclosed by a strong rail fence. This fence ran south along the road, about three quarters of a mile. The fence then turned east running in that direction until the heavy and almost impenetrable woods east of us were reached. The first part of the field near the farm house was quite free of trees, but the lower part ran into and included considerable of the woods in which we found the enemy. On the right of the cross road, which would be looking in the direction of our main army on Cache River, was a long stretch of ground thinly covered with large trees but free of underbrush. This, of course, ran back to and connected with the heavier woods where the enemy had made his rendezvous. For a

short distance on the right side of the cross road there had formerly been an enclosure, and about a quarter of a mile from the main road the remains of a rail fence, running some little distance west, was still standing. When we first met the enemy we had passed beyond the farthest fence, but as the battle progressed we had fallen back to it, and many of our men were in the woods of the enclosure. Thus it will be seen that when the enemy's cavalry charged upon us, with the highway for his center, his right wing would strike the heavy fence and thus be thrown into confusion with his center upon the road, and this would naturally carry many of them into the woods to his left, our right, and those still advancing would soon strike the remains of the fence on that side causing many more to turn off into the open woods. Those who had kept in the open road would now suddenly come in sight of our reserve line; if near enough receive a leaden salute, and they, too, would then turn into the woods and disappear. Remembering that these desperate charges were mainly made by men on horseback in a mad headlong gallop; that they were first thrown into confusion by a fence on one side and then broken by the remains of one on the other side; that at every step and from each side they were severely suffering from the rifles of our sharpshooters, it will readily be seen that great advantages were open to us and that we improved them to the utmost.

The fight still goes on. The enemy became at last most desperately enraged. Their unobstructed access to the road between us and the rest of the Union

army still gave them full knowledge that no aid had yet come to us. Why don't they come? We have been fighting on, on, expecting each moment to hear the dash of the Union cavalry coming to our aid. And then our own comrades of the Thirty-third and the brothers of the Wisconsin boys, why do they not come? Only four companies of each regiment are here. Six of each are there. Why do they dally in the woods? Are they playing by the wayside and we struggling here? Why don't they come? If all others become indifferent to our fate they can not. No, indeed! Too oft have they and we divided our scant rations with each other; suffered together; mourned at the same graves; mingled in the same joys and shared the same trials. A faintly whispered, dread suspicion passes among us. Can it be that the heavy rebel armies have come from east of the Mississippi or other fields in overwhelming force to destroy the Union army in these Arkansas wilds? Let it be remembered that we have long been cut off from communication with the outside world. We have no definite information from other fields. At the North it is reported that Curtis' army is lost in Arkansas. So little have we known of what has occurred in Kentucky and Tennessee and in the far East during the past months, that only wild imagination is our guide. Are the heavy forces so hotly pressing us, part of a monstrous, gigantic rebel army that has, unknown to us, crossed the Mississippi and come up the Arkansas and White Rivers? Has a still heavier force thrown itself between us and our army? Is the Union army we so lately left even now cut off from

aiding us? With our eyes steadily fixed upon the enemy in front, our ears are turned anxiously toward our own army to hear if the murderous air shall bring to us the sound of their booming guns. But it matters little to us what the fate of others may be. It is now too late. Too well we know that the enraged rebels have already suffered too severely and that now no terms will be asked or given. It is now a fight to the death. The thought that life can be saved by a surrender is banished from every mind. To steal our way through the dark woods and deep swamps to our Northern homes is impossible. We begin to gather in more compact form. There is a feeling that in a few moments our last cartridge will be fired and then all that will be left is to fix bayonets and with the cold steel do all we can as we rush to our doom.

It is afterward learned that the Union troops have been so busily engaged and created such a continual racket in crossing Cache River that they did not hear anything of our fierce fight. It was supposed that we would only advance some two or at most three miles at which distance a stubborn contest could be easily traced by the sound of the firing guns. Thus it was supposed that we were quietly lying in the woods, waiting for the advance of the army. Instead of that we had gone some seven or eight miles and were so far away that the guns they now and then heard were thought to be only idle shots fired at random into the woods to see if any strolling bands of rebels were trying to creep upon us. The first information the Union army had of our hot engagement was given by



one of our soldiers who had become completely demoralized at the first fire and ran back reporting us all killed. In quick time a force of Union cavalry was galloping to our rescue. Of this we were not advised.

Thus no reinforcements had reached us and the desperate rebels, chagrined, mortified, raving mad for the third time, with a fully organized force, came up on a desperate, sweeping, reckless charge. On they come with unbridled fury. We break into little bands among each thick cluster of trees and keep up a continued fire into the dense mass of advancing foes. All of the former scenes are re-enacted now with redoubled force. We turn and fire at rebels in our rear as often as we do at those in front. Upon each occasion we had been obliged to fall further back. We were now so near that the rebel charge through our line carried some of them within range of the guns of the Wisconsin boys, who well and promptly improved their opportunity. Pressed by fire in front together with the shot we gave them in the rear those rebels who had passed our line rushed with headlong speed into the woods on our right as those who came before had done. Grand confusion now reigns. The woods are full of riderless horses, running here and there, racing and tearing, hardly more reckless or aimless than those yet guided by their rebel riders. Our ammunition is now nearly exhausted. Those entirely out borrow two or three cartridges of others, but none have much. The store of our wounded has been greedily taken by those who still can use their guns. Straining every nerve, firing with the utmost care we



watch the result with vivid interest. Too well we know the fatal result that threatens us. A few seconds of this vital anxiety and then the rebel lines begin to tremble, waver and then break, and those alive hasten away leaving the ground, even where we stand, strewn with their dead. Thus for the third time, a rebel charge in mass, has been repulsed and driven back. We now have to fire at long range, careful to do so only when we have a good shot. If they come on us again, in solid mass, we are helpless. Every movement is quickly noticed. The rebels who have crossed our lines in their headlong career and been driven into the woods on our right, toward our main army, are now seen to increase their hot speed toward the rear. Farther off, glimpses of the rebel cavalry, who have been watching upon the road, can be seen going fiercely toward their main command. Beyond these, still farther off, a cloud of dust is seen swelling up through and over the trees, and a moment more the glorious music of the rattling sabers of the Union cavalry is heard and then we see their foaming horses as they come to our aid. Closely following the cavalry, as they come to our relief, we soon see the gleaming guns and hear the glad hurrah of our infantry boys. The soldiers of the Thirty-third Illinois and Eleventh Wisconsin had run those seven long miles on a hot Southern July day to relieve us, their own comrades, and the battle is over.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### BATTLE OF BLACK RIVER.

SUNDAY morning, May 17, 1863, found us ready to move forward as soon as it was light enough to march. We were now given the advance. A rapid march brought us within sight of the rebel works at Black River. The outside picket guards were driven in without difficulty.

The conditions for a stubborn defense were ample. The rebel position was a strong one. At this point Black River is a stream of considerable size. The wagon road to Vicksburg, as well as the railroad, here crosses the river. On the west side of Black River are some high bluffs. We were approaching from the east. Why the Confederates did not select these bluffs on the west side of the river as the place for their fortifications, it is hard to tell; they probably thought the position chosen preferable. It certainly was a mistake. Still, the place selected for their fortifications was by no means a weak one. Had not the west bank of Black River furnished stronger natural positions, that selected by the rebels would have been

considered a wise selection. Some little distance from the east side of the main river was a channel of considerable width and depth. This virtually created an island, which lay between the main river and this channel or bayou. The island was the place selected by the enemy for his fortifications. The island was of sufficient size, and the ground being comparatively level and unbroken, it was probably selected by the rebels as a better place for the movement of troops than would have been the uneven hills upon the west side of the river. Again, east of the bayou was a smooth valley varying from half a mile to a mile in width. As the attacking force would have to pass over this level ground, the rebels doubtless thought that they could easily destroy all who attempted to approach, before their works could be reached.

A range of forts well supplied with heavy artillery had been built along the east side of the bayou. These had been connected with a complete chain of breastworks for the enemy's infantry. Thus an attacking force would have to first charge over a wide space of level ground; then pass a deep and wide stream of water, and then climb the rebel fortifications upon the bank of the channel before they could reach the well fortified rebels. What possessed the enemy to waste so much valuable strength in fighting in the open woods upon Champion Hills when Black River, so near at hand, afforded them such superior positions of defense, is, indeed, a marvel.

We were upon the skirmish line and consequently the first troops in sight of the enemy that morning. The position our company held was next to and upon

the south side of the road running west toward Vicksburg. This brought us in front of the center and strongest part of the enemy's works. The valley between the rebel works and the small wood-covered hills was at this point a little over half of a mile in width. The valley at this point had been a cultivated corn or cane field. The previous year's furrows ran parallel with the rebel works. The small hills back of this field were covered with a thick growth of underbrush. Had the enemy been thoughtful and industrious enough to have cut and burned all of the small trees and brush upon these hills as far back as heavy artillery could reach, it would have been of untold advantage to him. To our right the valley lessened in width so that the ground covered with trees reached nearer to the rebel works. To our left it continued to widen so that the rebel works upon that part of the line had at least a mile of level ground over which to fire.

Our early morning call had evidently greatly surprised the indolent enemy. As we, upon the skirmish line, came out of the woods and upon the level field in front of their works, we beheld wild confusion in the rebel lines. Evidently they had not yet all got up and finished their breakfast, much less formed into line ready to meet us. All were aroused and called into line. If we had been supported by a solid column, at that moment, we could no doubt have rushed over and taken the works before the enemy was prepared to defend them. But just then the Union troops at hand were only those of a small skirmish line of barely sufficient strength to feel of the enemy.

From the ground we were upon, all of the movements of the enemy could be plainly noted. Officers mounted in hot haste and rushed among the rebel soldiers to arouse and hurry them into position. Every movement of the enemy was plainly seen by us. We could note the strength of each rebel command and see to which part of the line it was sent. Probably no battle was ever before fought which was so completely seen from its commencement to its end as was the battle of Black River by those of us who were upon the advance skirmish line.

To get as near to the rebel works as we did upon such ground was wonderful. For any of us to live through the fight that ensued, holding the position we did, was a miracle. Our ability to advance so close to them was no doubt largely owing to the confusion in the enemy's ranks caused by our early approach. The first firing of the rebels was fearfully wild. They seemed only to put the muzzles of their guns over their breastworks and fire into the air at random. Such firing is more apt to hit those far in the rear as the bullets fall to the ground, than to trouble those who, like us, are near at hand. Now and then a gun in the hands of a cool-headed rebel would be fired with more judgment at our line. A few were hit. I supposed that I was one of the unfortunate ones. A rifle ball passed near enough to "burn" my face. I then knew by experience how it was with so many others who for a moment supposed they were hit, when they were not. I plainly felt a hole cut through my cheek. That the passing bullet had cut a deep, long gash through the side of my face I did



not doubt. I immediately put up my hand to see how much of my cheek was left, and to my glad surprise found that the bullet had simply grazed and not cut me. Those who have experienced both, insist that at the first moment, a bullet that passes near enough to "burn" by the "hot wind" of a swift revolving bullet, produces a much sharper sting than that caused by a direct shot.

Our skirmish line pressed well forward, much farther than prudence would have permitted, and then each selected the best place he could find and lay upon the ground and commenced to load and fire as opportunity offered. Amidst thickly flying bullets it is surprising how small an elevation of ground a soldier can make available as breastwork. The rough plowing of the previous year's crop had left deep furrows and corresponding ridges, the best of which served us well during the hot fight in which we were engaged. The success with which a soldier can, under such circumstances, apparently sink into the ground and out of sight while loading his gun, can not be realized by those who have never seen it done.

Some of our artillery were soon in place on the hills behind us and commenced their work upon the enemy. The artillery was supported by the infantry columns. This heavy force on the higher ground in our rear soon claimed the entire attention of the rebels in our front. They no doubt also believed that all who had advanced on the skirmish line had been killed. These things combined caused us to be neglected by the enemy so that we were at liberty to load and fire at pleasure and almost unmolested. While



it, no doubt, did far more harm in the rebel ranks, still the few guns on the skirmish line attracted no attention when mingled with the fierce firing of the two contending armies. And then our nearness to the rebel line made it difficult for them to look over their works to take effective aim at us. Even when the conditions of the ground are favorable, the experience of war is that most of the firing done carries the balls high above the effective point. Situated as we were it was safe to calculate that the rebel bullets would pass above us. There being so much vacant space in the open air compared with the little space occupied by one individual, is the reason why so few are killed compared with the amount of lead shot in battle. The space occupied by a man is but a mere speck compared with all out doors, and there are a thousand chances to miss, to one to hit him with the ball of a random shot.

Our artillery had a capital position. The hills upon which our cannon were placed were within easy range of the rebel works. Our gunners were much better marksmen than those handling the rebel artillery. The thick underbrush completely covered the movements of our men. An entire battery would be run into position under cover of the thick young trees, careful aim taken and then altogether commence a rapid fire upon the rebel works. As soon as the rebel artillery began to get their guns bearing on the spot our men would run their guns to another point and the first notice of the change the enemy would get was another well-aimed volley. With different batteries doing this and a fine range of favor-

able ground to stand upon our artillery did most effective work. With our sharp-shooters on the skirmish line so near at hand to annoy every one who attempted to handle a rebel cannon, and our artillerymen so well improving their opportunities, the result of the artillery duel was favorable to the Union side. All things combined produced the strange result, that superior artillery protected by complete works was worsted by smaller guns in the open field. During the fight many of the protected rebel guns were dismounted, while our artillery out in the open field escaped with but little harm.

Thus the battle raged with our cannon in our rear, and the rebel guns in our front, both firing over us. We were fortunately low enough so that both sides fired their balls and shells above us. The smoke and confusion of the heavy contest also served to withdraw all attention from our skirmish line and left us free to use our trusty rifles to the best advantage. After the engagement had commenced in earnest, the greatest danger we were in was from imperfect shells which would burst on the way, and from faulty charges of powder or misdirected guns which now and then sent iron and lead to plow the ground where we lay.

It would be useless to attempt to describe the terrific scenes of this fierce contest as viewed from the position we held between the two contending forces. The heavy battle smoke rapidly rising continually opened the entire scene to our view. Even in the hottest of the fight every move of the enemy could be noted by us. One rebel officer, mounted upon a powerful white horse, attracted unusual attention. As he

first started at the beginning of the fight he appeared to be supported by a numerous staff. His daring was so reckless that he often became the mark our riflemen aimed at. As time passed swiftly on, one by one of his assistants were seen to be disabled. He rode until the last of his staff had fallen or left the field, and still the rider upon the white horse, within range of our guns, continued to inspire the rebel soldiers. At last, as it became plain that the day was soon to be ours, a desire seemed to spring up to let the reckless rider live, and he was permitted to ride away at the last unharmed. As the artillery battle reached its height, all incidents and individual matters were absorbed by the fierce grandeur of the terrific storm raging around and above us. For a time the cannon in front of us, the cannon behind us, the cannon around us, thundered and roared and poured forth their fierce storm of fire and shot. Look to the front, look to the rear, look everywhere and the red-mouthed artillery seemed opened upon us. Above us was the black cloud of battle smoke, through which crashed and burst and screamed the murderous shell and ball. But few ever looked upon what we saw during that hour, and lived to tell the tale of the day's conflict. Imagination has often suggested that the grandest place from which to view a battle scene would be from a stationary balloon anchored high above the field of battle, and from thence to look down upon both contending forces. Even this would not prove equal to the position we held, because the rising smoke would then obscure the view, while with us, the dense cloud continually rose

so that we could look beneath it and see the entire fury of the fierce conflict.

Although the gigantic grandeur of the conflict was created by the heavy artillery and the solid ranks of infantry in our rear, still the most effective work of the entire battle was done by the line of skirmishers, who, with their trusty rifles, had approached so near the rebel works. We held our ground during the entire battle. In fact it was better to do so than to have attempted to go back while so plainly within range of the rebel guns. I had a little experience in this. Near to me was John Spradling of our company. A piece of bursting shell struck him in the side or top part of his hip inflicting a fearful wound. He supposed that it was fatal and told us that he would soon die. His wound bled badly but his strength remained so well that he soon thought that if he could get medical aid there might still be a chance for him to live. If death is inevitable a soldier will die without a single word of complaint. While there is hope of life he is anxious to improve it. Spradling became wildly anxious to get back where his wound could be attended to before he bled to death. He desired me to help him. It was a dangerous undertaking. The artillery on both sides was still firing rapidly. Standing up incurred more danger from the balls and shells swiftly flying from both front and rear over our heads. The worst, however, was to slowly walk over so much exposed ground, and that in plain sight and range of the solid line of rebel riflemen. The hope was that they would not care to waste any shots at a crippled soldier and his assistant,

going to the rear. I got our wounded comrade up and started. With my gun fastened upon one shoulder—a soldier never abandons his gun—I lent my other shoulder and arm to the wounded man. He was so injured that practically he could use only one foot to assist in the walk. Going back in this condition was slow and tedious. The hope of magnanimity on the part of the rebels was misplaced. We had not gone far before the screeching rifle balls aimed at us commenced hissing by our ears. Spradling knew that he would die if he stayed upon the field. Another ball could do no more than kill him. He begged to go on. As a soldier who could yet be useful in front I ought not to have taken the chances. But who could withstand the pleading of a wounded soldier. And then who could tell what the result would be? The chances were even that he would be hit as soon as I. Then my mission toward the rear would be ended. A soldier's life makes all reckless of danger. All places in the midst of a fierce battle are dangerous. What great difference did it make, for us to go or stay? I told Spradling to brace up and we would continue until one or the other of us fell. It is not wild to say that, during our tedious journey, at least a thousand rifle balls aimed at us passed near, and, strange to say, neither of us was touched. There must have been some special Providence that protected us. With much difficulty I managed to get back over the open ground, reached the woods, dragged our wounded comrade up over the hill and then back until we met a squad with their white badges and a stretcher in whose hands I placed the wounded sol-



dier and who carried him back to the field hospital where his wounds could be dressed.

Relieved of our wounded soldier I turned and immediately went forward to rejoin my comrades. It is usual in such cases to remain with the main line and not hazard the attempt to reach the skirmish line in front. Probably it would be more correct to state the fact that it is always usual in all battles for the entire skirmish line to fall back out of the way when the actual engagement commences. It was only owing to the peculiar condition of the ground upon which it was fought that in this battle we upon the skirmish line retained our advanced position and allowed the heavy firing to be done over our heads.

Many indications told us that the battle would soon be ended. Most of the rebel cannon had been silenced. The rebel infantry began to exhibit evidences of uneasiness. I was anxious to be in at the end. To go forward was of course far different from what my retreat had been. Being alone I could skip along lively. There was a chance to select the ground and now and then dodge behind some protection. In short, going back was not by any manner of means a matter of recklessness.

My return had been none too soon. I had hardly reached our skirmish line when the last move in the battle of Black River was made. It was a brisk, sharp and successful charge upon the rebel works. This is how it happened: The woods to our right ran well down toward the rebel works. Colonel Bailey of the Ninety-ninth Illinois—"old rough and ready number two," General Benton had called him after the



battle of Magnolia Hills—was with the advance. In their zeal the Union soldiers had pressed to the verge of the woods which brought them near to the rebel works. It became right hot for our boys so near to the enemy's lines. They had no orders to go farther; in fact, had already pushed on farther than orders had been given for them to go. The proper thing to have done was to have fallen back to a less exposed position. Colonel Bailey was one of those awkward officers who could never learn military rules. His only idea of war was to pitch in and whip the enemy whenever and wherever he could be found. By his impetuosity he became the hero of the day's battle. Had his unauthorized movement failed he would probably have been at least dismissed from the army. No, he would not. Had it failed and he come out of it alive, he might have been tried by a court-martial, but that never would have happened. His rash act was bound to succeed or Colonel Bailey would have been killed in the attempt.

Finding it disagreeable to be so near the rebel works and seeing the effective fire upon his soldiers, Colonel Bailey became fighting mad and yelled out in thundering tones that rang along the line: "Boys, it is getting too d—— hot here. Let us go for the the cussed rebels!" Before the last word was out of his mouth, with a drawn sword flashing in the air, he was on a fierce run toward the rebel works. With a wild hurrah his entire command joined him in the wild race. Others to the right and left, without a moment's delay or a single command, joined in the mad career, and thus with wild cheers the entire

Union line joined in a charge upon the rebel works.

The disheartened Confederates having already suffered so severely, and vividly remembering the fearful pounding they had received the day before at Champion Hills, at once gave up all hope of further defense and immediately abandoned their works, and were in a hot race to the rear before the Union troops had reached their lines. Crossing the bayou was no easy matter. In front of part of our line the water was only breast deep; through this the soldiers easily waded, holding their guns and cartridge boxes above the water. In some places the stagnant water was covered with drift-wood. Here some would jump from one log to another like rabbits. In places where the water was more open a soldier running up would jump on to a floating log and the momentum of the fierce run would carry both him and the log across so that he could jump dry shod upon the other side, before the log he thus used for a boat commenced to turn wrong side up. In front of us the water was deeper and wider, but as good fortune would have it, the rebels had only removed the planks from the bridge, leaving the narrow stringers still running over. Our company immediately jumped upon these stringers and ran across like squirrels. The rest of the skirmish line followed, and thus the Thirty-third was soon all inside of the rebel works, being the first troops inside the main part of the fort. Other troops came in hot haste. The rebels were gone. And the battle of Black River was ended.

A fine lot of rebel cannon was taken with the fort. Our boys had learned a little war experience from the fight of the day before. As we drove the enemy from

some of his cannon at Champion Hills, we rushed forward without regard to the guns. When we afterward sent back for them we found that the troops who had followed us had taken possession of the captured cannon, and were thus entitled to the credit of their capture. The rule is, that if a command captures artillery it must retain possession of it, or else the next command coming up will have the right to claim it. Infantry troops can not always carry captured artillery along with them, nor stop in the midst of a fight to retain possession of it. To provide for these and other difficulties that might arise, the established rule has become for the troops who capture a cannon to have one of their men "straddle" it, that is, sit upon it as though on horseback. Then the command can go to any other work at hand, and the one soldier upon the gun will be recognized by the entire army as in full possession of it. Thus one man for each piece of artillery is all the regiment need leave to retain possession of captured cannon. Of course, should any of the enemy return, the "straddling" is ended, and it is again a fight for possession of the guns. We had profited by the Champion Hills lesson, and the result was that the captured rebel forts were full of Thirty-third boys "straddling" the captured cannon. Thus we were credited with the capture of cannon enough to supply a good sized army, and were more than made even for the loss of those we had neglected to "straddle" at Champion Hills. The captured guns came near being a burden to us, there were so many of them that they could not be disposed of at once, so an entire company of our regiment was detailed to

take care of the captured guns until they could be properly disposed of.

The rebels retreated across the river and went toward Vicksburg. One of their batteries took position upon the high bluffs on the west side of the river and fired a few rounds at us, but as soon as they saw one of our batteries getting into position to reply to them, they "limbered up" and scampered away. This was the last we saw of the rebels at Black River.

## CHAPTER XX.

### CHARGE UPON VICKSBURG.

THE charge upon Vicksburg was described in an address delivered in Lockport on July 4, 1866. As the journal from which this record is taken was drawn upon for part of that description, it can properly be given here:

Some of my friends have expressed a wish—perhaps most of you desire—that upon this occasion I should, as a soldier, give a brief picture of a battle scene. Such request I can not well disregard, yet I would prefer some more pleasant theme.

Standing here as I do to-day, and remembering that this is not only the anniversary of our National birth, but also that of a later event, how can I forget that three years ago I saw the surrender of Vicksburg.

Those of us who were there can never forget the time when we stood upon the immortal hills of Vicksburg. We can never forget the trying hours, the dreary days of that long, desperate, eventful and bloody conflict. And the desperate charge of the twenty-second of May! It can never be forgotten. How can it be portrayed? Words would fail to describe the scene. One might as well try to paint on

canvass the fearful sound of roaring thunder, as to attempt to fully describe a battle.

Opposing armies lay confronting each other. The enemy was intrenched behind his seemingly invincible works. Nature's strongest fortifications had been improved, if improvement was possible, by the most elaborate engineering skill. The high and steep hills made most directions of approach impossible. Through deep and narrow defiles converging toward the city were the only possible roads; and at the end of each of these an absolute guard seemed to have been placed in the shape of some stubborn hill from the heights of which frowned the red-mouthed artillery of the rebel battlements. Where can a comparison be found? Could you, my friends, by soaring off on fairy wings to other worlds, imagine a scene where the arch fiend of evil having been defeated had retreated to the high realms of his own domains, and there, with all the skill of his destroying genius, had invented a castle, the only approach to which was through long, deep and narrow defiles, in which only a narrow column could advance; the whole length of which was swept by the most destroying machines that satanic ingenuity could invent, you will then have some impression of what we met on our attack upon Vicksburg.

Such as these were the conditions opposed to us upon that eventful morn of the twenty-second of May, when word was passed along the line that in one hour we would charge the enemy's works.

The emotions caused by this announcement can not be explained by any natural passion of the human heart. No fear nor dread seemed to be coursing



through the soldier's veins. It was not false indifference nor wild, consuming enthusiasm; all spoke calmly or thought quietly of the desperate contest in which they were soon to mingle, perhaps to die. Love tokens and short messages were left with the simple and seemingly almost indifferent request. "If I do not come back, send them home." Perhaps some of you, my friends, have some of those last tokens of remembrance; and all, yes, upon every heart throughout the land, there is, I know, impressed the token of kindest remembrance for some noble soldier who did not come back from the war. Neither could vaulting ambition nor lofty patriotism, nor wild, consuming religious zeal fully explain those strange emotions. It was as though some all-powerful spirit, like the ancient god of war, had come down and consumed the human hearts of those who once were men. Not brutalized them—no! no, indeed! All were tenderly kind to each other. And yet the fiery god had changed them so that all would march quietly on to death as though it was a higher aim to contribute to the fame of fiery Mars than to simply live a human life. A clear and pretty stream, clothed by imagination with human life and thoughts courses sweetly, quietly on its way; leaping down the rugged hills, playing across the fertile valleys, laughing over the blooming meadows and passing through the golden fields; running on, on toward the grand and beautiful lake, or boundless ocean, by which it will soon be swallowed up and consumed. It approaches the end with a quiet dread and solemn regret that its individuality is to be lost; yet it would not stay if it

could, because it will soon form part of that greater and more magnificent grandeur beyond. Is it some strange, undefined emotion like this, that actuates the soldier when he so willingly marches on to death, and which the world, that through ages past, carelessly named the soldier's love of glory? Perhaps it is so; yet to those who judge according to the dictates of reason how strange it is. Although I once, to some extent, felt this strange spirit of war, yet as I am here to-day, in this pretty grove, surrounded by the cool, peaceful and pleasant influences of this hour, it all seems but as a dream, and I can understand it no more than those who never saw a battle field.

The fated hour of ten arrived. Officers of high rank seemed to have forgotten the usual words of military command. No formal commands of "Forward, march" were given. With drawn swords they started forth, simply saying, "Boys, come on, follow me." A moment more, and the hurricane of ruin burst upon us, as with but one stroke of a sweeping, crushing tornado. Within, what a rapid, seething sea of death were we now mingled. Even at this late day, I hardly dare, even in thought, to review that gory scene; nor could I do so if I would, for the terrible grandeur of that terrific conflict so completely drowned us with its sweeping fury, that we were not able to appreciate its destructive powers. The thunder roar of ponderous artillery; the fiery flash of bursting shell and powder blast; the singing, screeching rifle balls; the heavy sulphurous clouds of battle smoke that enveloped those murderous hills and deep valleys of the dead in one great, dark and mysterious sea of fire,

and death, and ruin—all this combined was a scene of reality which could not be equaled except by transforming the scene of the first great battle; refought, not beneath heaven's shining light, but amidst those clouds of darkness—darkness so dense that it could be felt—that reigns throughout the realms of eternal night;—combine these two most graphic of human imaginations; combine the fury of heaven's battle with the darkness of eternal death, and you will then have a picture of the realities of a battle scene.

Deep ravines were filled with the bodies of fallen heroes, over which passed succeeding ranks. Still on, on pressed rank after rank until the rebel works were reached. Our comrades lay strewn upon the field behind us. Those left had not strength to surmount and hold the works upon which we were now contending. Both friend and foe were now upon the same range of hills, only separated by the narrow breastworks: and there, through all the hours of that livelong day, the terrible conflict continued, in a bitter hand-to-hand contest. Thus the fury raged until night mercifully threw its mantle of darkness over the gory scene and then each of the contending parties returned to the lines from which they advanced to commence that unparalleled conflict.

Such as these were the scenes through which we passed during our desperate charge upon Vicksburg. Then during those long hours of night, as I stood, watching upon the borders of that gory field from which we had returned, and where so many loved comrades lay; in those dark hours of night, as the truth passed before me in thought, I could but al-

most doubt the realities of our own existence. Do we live in a world of truth, or within the dark realms of despair? Is this earth, or is it the place of eternal death? Were these beings before me men and brothers, or were they demons? Does God reign and are such things as these real? After many long and tedious days the glorious anniversary of our National birth returned, bringing with it, as it ever does, the glorious shout of victory. On the fourth of July, Vicksburg fell. Then the feeling of joy in every heart, could be equaled in depth only by the anguish of those former days. Then throughout our lines every soldier's heart rose up in praise to heaven in thanks, that the cause of justice and right had triumphed, and that we could once more believe in the reign of a just God.

#### A FEW INCIDENTS.

During the siege of Vicksburg many amusing incidents occurred. A few will be recounted:

One of our soldiers, an Irishman, was on guard one night in the front trenches. These advanced trenches ran so near to the enemy's line that the picket guards could at night, when it was still, talk across from their rifle pits. Discovering that Pat was easily annoyed, the rebel guards commenced blackguarding him. After plaguing him about other matters they began to tease him about the worthlessness of the shells fired from the Union mortars on the gun-boats. As a rule it must be admitted that these shells did no great damage. Among other things the rebels told Pat that "the only harm

the shells have yet done is to kill two mules and lame one old woman." Just then through some strange accident a shell happened to come from the river dropping and bursting among Pat's tormentors, injuring two or three and causing the balance to scamper for dear life. Ere the sound of the bursting shell had died away the shrill voice of Pat was heard crying: "There, ye infernal cusses, put that in ye haversack and chaw it, will ye, ye blathering blackguards."

Another about the mortar shells is this: When General Bowine, the Confederate officer, first came out under a flag of truce, on the third of July, to treat for terms of surrender, he suggested that hostilities cease during the negotiations. The Union officers readily acquiesced, but mentioned the difficulty of getting orders to the gun-boats in time. "Oh, well," he replied, "that is of no consequence; never mind the gun-boats; they never harm us any."

One day toward the end of the siege, one of the Confederates cried out to our soldiers, saying: "We are going to have a new General." "Ah, indeed," was the reply, "and who is he?" "General Starvation," coolly replied the comical Confederate soldier. To appreciate this it should be remembered that the rebel soldier was at the time almost starved; with him it was an empty stomach joke.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

### FROM NEW ORLEANS TO NEW YORK AND THENCE TO ILLINOIS.

SATURDAY, September seventeenth, we were surprised by the sudden and unexpected orders to start at once for the North. A special train at once took us to Algiers. We immediately crossed the river to New Orleans. The reason for this sudden haste was this: a large number of Confederate prisoners were on hand and it was desired that we should guard them on the way to the North. We are to take the prisoners to New York and then go to our own State to be discharged. There are over one hundred soldiers of the Thirty-third whose time has now expired, who will go with us.

• On Sunday, September eighteenth, we embarked on the steam propeller, *Cassandra*. We had some three

hundred prisoners. They were part of those captured at Fort Morgan. They were very well clothed and the best looking set of Confederate soldiers I have yet seen. As we took them through the streets from the prison to the ship, the Southern women came out to smile upon and wish the Confederate prisoners good-bye. This pleased the prisoners. We took the prisoners on board at three P. M. At five o'clock every thing was ready and we steamed down the river.

At sunrise Monday morning we passed from the river to the gulf through the Southwest Pass and then turned southeast and sailed toward Key West. We had a pleasant sail Monday and Tuesday. Toward night on Tuesday the wind began to rise and through the night and the next day we had a rough sea. Many of the boys became seasick. We reached Key West after dark Wednesday. We had one passenger and some mail to land. As the yellow fever is raging in Key West we did not wish to run into port and laid outside until Thursday morning. A small boat then took our passengers and the mail and we went on our way. At night we passed the last light-house we will see on the southern coast of Florida and turned to the north. The boys were greatly pleased when the boat commenced running to the north. It seems like going home when we can see the north star in our front. During our three years' sojourn in the south, with danger and death for our daily companions, often, in the dark night march, and still more frequently during the lonely night guard, the only steadfast guide we could see and know was the ever faithful north star, always

shining like a beacon light over our Northern homes. Thus the north star, always reminding us of Northern liberty and the land of our birth, has become to us soldiers of the North, a well-known friend and faithful guide, and with glad hearts we follow in the path it marks, knowing that every step taken, with its light in front, takes us nearer home. Glorious star of the north; glorious land of liberty, gladly do your sons follow the light of the one that guides them to the bosom of the other.

Saturday and Sunday we had a splendid sea with a good brisk wind in our rear which aided us to sail nicely. During part of the time enormous shoals of fishes followed us. It was a wonderful sight. Where could so many fish come from? Some of the boys declared that all the fish in the sea had assembled and come up to greet us on our happy journey home. We passed Cape Hatteras during Sunday night and ran within sight of the Atlantic shore most of the day Monday. As we began to near the busy cities of the North we met with evidences of their busy commerce by seeing many sails upon the water.

On this trip I heard more politics than is usual with us in the army. The services were very short. It consisted of this: Some of our soldiers had newspapers, part of which were given to the rebel prisoners, whom we kept guarded in their part of the boat. Among the papers given to them was one that supported the Democratic candidate for President, General McClellan, and contained a positive prediction of his election. This was read aloud by one of the Confederate prisoners to the others, and thereupon they all

joined in loud cheers for General McClellan. Upon hearing the rebels cheer for McClellan the few Union soldiers who had intended to vote for him announced that they should vote for Lincoln. It was the shortest and most effective political address I ever heard. A speech without words—simply three rebel yells—changed all the McClellan voters into Lincoln men.

The weather remained fine and we had a pleasant run the rest of the way to New York. Reaching that place the first thing to do was to turn our prisoners over to the proper authorities. This done we landed in New York City. Wednesday afternoon and evening we had a little time to run around the city, which we improved.

Thursday, September twenty-ninth, we took the cars for the west at Jersey City. Passed through some fine towns and country. Paterson, as we saw it, appears to be a very pretty place. Goshen is the center of a splendid farming country. We passed through Elmira during the night and ran on to Hornellsville where we changed cars. We took the forenoon train Friday, from this place, and ran through to Dunkirk. We arrived too late to make connection with the west bound train, and had to lay over and take the evening train for Cleveland. We rode all night and reached Cleveland at a late hour Saturday morning. We were again too late to make connection and had to lay over in Cleveland for the afternoon train. Ran around and looked at the town a little. Visited the water-works and a few other places. Cleveland is one of the prettiest cities I ever visited. At half-past two we started again and passed through

Oberlin and other thriving Ohio towns and reached Toledo at a late hour at night. Our afternoon ride gave us a fine view of some of the finest farming country in the world. We stopped at Toledo, sleeping in the depot buildings over night. We remained in the city over Sunday. As it was our first opportunity for three long years, a number of us attended church, in a peaceful land, Sunday forenoon. At night we got upon the cars and just before midnight started for Illinois. We passed through Fort Wayne during the night and reached Peru in time for breakfast. At the State Line we found the train of the Great Western waiting for us. Our cars were attached and we started forward and reached Camp Butler shortly after dark, Monday, October 3, 1864.

Thus after three years' absence once again our feet are upon the soil of our own noble State. All hail to Illinois! Proud and noble State, your sons are as proud of you as you are justly proud of them. The land of our birth; the home of our youth; the hope of our future, gladly do we greet thee, our own prairie State. If the returning soldier boys stood erect, if they walked with a proud step, if their eyes beamed with glad satisfaction as they returned the cheers that greeted them on their return to Illinois, who can blame them? In every battle from Missouri and Kentucky to the Southern gulf and even on to the borders of Mexico the soldiers of Illinois have been in the thickest of the fight. On every occasion the Illinois soldiers have added to the proud fame of the grand prairie State. No matter how thickly came the iron and leaden hail from the rebel guns, the vol-



unteer soldiers from sister States never wavered when by their side they could see the regimental banners with Illinois written thereon. All knew that the Illinois part of the line would be maintained.

With all of the long distance over which we have marched and desperate fields upon which we have fought with the gallant Western army we have never left our wounded nor our dead to be handled or buried by rebel hands. Upon all occasions we have taken care of our own. We have never left a contested field except as victors. Fortune has been exceedingly kind to us, and we return to our own State at her capital, to lay down unsullied the proud commission she gave us to serve as part of her volunteer soldiery. Grand and noble State of Illinois! May her sons through all time sustain the record made in the years of 1861-62-63 and '64. All hail to the State of Illinois!

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE END OF MY SOLDIER LIFE—HOME AGAIN.

THERE was some delay in the making out of our discharge papers, which gave us an opportunity to visit the city of Springfield and other points of interest in the vicinity of Camp Butler.

On Wednesday, October fifth, some of us attended a great mass-meeting of those who favor the re-elec-

tion of Lincoln. I saw Governor Yates, Judge Trumbull, Senator Doolittle, Generals Logan, Palmer and Oglesby, Deacon Bross, Colonel Ingersoll and other speakers. Met Lieutenant Fyffe of Company A, and M. J. Nye, a former member of our company.

Edward Pike, the orderly sergeant of Company A, whose term expires and who came home with us, became so unwell that he had to be taken to the camp hospital.

Sunday, October ninth, the One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Illinois came into Camp Butler, having just returned from Western Missouri. My brother Griffin was with them. This was the first time I had seen him, or any of my relatives, for over three years. He had grown considerable since I saw him last. Then he was a little boy, now he is a young soldier.

Monday, October eleventh, the mustering officer called the roll of our detachment, and then in formal manner pronounced the words: "You are now honorably discharged from the service of the army of the United States of America."

The only thing now to do was to wait for the paymaster and then go home. Those who lived near enough to Springfield went to their homes immediately; those of us whose homes were too far away remained. The paymaster was slow in coming, causing us to wait longer than we expected.

I spent most of the day, the following Wednesday, in Springfield, and in the afternoon returned to Camp Butler. I was much surprised to there meet two more of my brothers in camp, Ralph and Webb. They had lately enlisted in a new company that was

organizing to join the old Twentieth Illinois. The first had served for a time in the One Hundredth Illinois and was now returning to the army. The latter, who was younger, had grown up, so as to be large enough to be a soldier since I left home in 1861. Both were buoyant and happy.

A few months afterward a sadder page was here inserted: Of us four brothers who had thus happened to meet as soldiers in Camp Butler, Webb, the poor boy, was the only one who was destined to fill a soldier's grave. He was stricken down, while in Camp Butler, with that fearful scourge of the army, typhoid fever. He was brought home sick, but all assistance was in vain. He died and was buried in the little country grave-yard near our farm home. He was the pride of the family. His strength of mind was never excelled by one of his years. Knowing him as I did, and fully appreciating how such mental activity as he possessed, unfitted one of his tender years for the physical hardships of soldier life, I had often written to dissuade him from joining the army. He ought to have remained at school. But the spirit of soldier ancestors was too strong, and he, like the rest, was bound to be a soldier before the war ended. He joined the army and was mustered out by death, and all that is left of our brightest hopes is to revere the memory of our young soldier brother, Edwin Webb Marshall, who died on January 24, 1865.

On Monday, October seventeenth, I went into the city, and, at head-quarters, found that the United States paymaster would be on hand the next day. I telegraphed to Bloomington and Carlinville, for the Thirty-

third boys to return. This was my last opportunity to serve my old comrades as soldiers. I went to Camp Butler, packed up my personal traps and then went to Springfield and stayed at the hotel over night. This was the first time I had slept in a bed, other than one made out of my soldier blankets, since I left home in 1861.

On Tuesday we met at Camp Butler; the Government paymaster paid us the balance our due, we bid farewell to our comrades, and each started for his own home. I took the night train on the Chicago & Alton going north and reached Joliet at an early hour the next morning. Here I took the morning train on the Chicago & Rock Island railroad, and ran up to Mokena. From there I walked across the fields to the township of New Lenox and was soon upon the old home farm, upon which I was born; and thus I reached home on Wednesday, October 19, 1864. The first one I met was little sister Mary—how she had grown while I was away. The little girl was out in the field trying to do what she could, attending to the farm stock, as her big brothers were all away soldiering. It is not strange that it was difficult for me to recognize her. I had never thought of the little puss only as for her brothers to tease and play with—just big enough for us to throw up and catch, as a ball, when playing with her.

The youngest of the family, little George, he, too, had grown and now was quite a large boy, had his team in the field, commencing to gather the fall crop of corn. Having come on the first train, my early arrival was taking those at home somewhat by sur-

prise. At the house, both busily engaged, I found sister Sarah—our oldest sister, whose frequent home letters had so often gladdened me during the past, three long years—and our mother—a mother, who, many, many long years ago, had been left a widow, with two little girls and five small boys to care for. All of her boys who were old enough had taken a part as soldiers, and now the prospect was fair that the end would come and she not be called upon to make her sacrifice. Upon this day a happy mother was she. Her greeting, to me, will not be described.

Wednesday, the day of my arrival, was a home visit. The next day the neighbors, hearing of my return, dropped in, one after another, to talk with and ask a thousand questions of army life. I was glad to meet and greet them all. And yet, sad greetings some of them were. Now and then, when the honest old farmer, his white-haired wife, or other kind neighbors grasped my hand, I could see tears mingled with the joyous words. The tale the tears told did not need to be explained in words. Too well I knew, that in the neighbor's home there was a vacant chair that never would again be filled. Many of the boys with whom I had joined in many a wild play at the little old log school house, in the edge of the woods, with whom I had worked, and rambled over the prairie land, with whom I had passed many a long, jolly night in the wild woods, lunching upon roasted, green corn and ripe apples gathered by the way, while hunting wild raccoons and other game; with whom I had robbed my own melon patch as well as theirs in turn, many of these boys had gone to the war never to return.



Thus was sorrow mixed with joy. Could I have said to each honest old father, to each fond mother, to each devoted wife, to each loving sister, brother, child and sweetheart: "Your soldier has lived to return from the war," these hours of my return home would have been the happiest of my life.

But for the sorrow it brings, every young man could well commence his worldly career by spending three years in army life.

## ARMY LIFE.

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### OPINIONS OF STATESMEN AND THE PRESS.

HON. E. B. WASHBURNE: You have occupied ground that has never before been covered.

HON. JOHN WENTWORTH: It deserves, and I doubt not will receive, a liberal patronage from the public.

HON. S. M. CULLOM, U. S. Senator: Your sketches possess an interest that does not attach to many more pretentious histories of the late war.

GEN. J. L. BEVERIDGE, Ex-Gov. of Ill.: Your book is to the military what Pilgrim's Progress is to the Christian world.

HON. T. S. CASEY, Judge of Appellate Court: Honestly, it is many a day since I read a book I really enjoyed as much.

JUDGE JOSIAH McROBERTS: I am highly pleased with it. The portrayal of the investment and final reduction of Vicksburg gives the reader a clearer idea of that memorable conflict than anything heretofore published.

HON. ISAAC N. ARNOLD: It is a really valuable contribution to the history of the war.

HON. JAMES McCARTNEY, Attorney General of Illinois: I am glad that a private soldier has been found who can fairly give his experiences and views of the war. I can commend your book.

GEN. CHAS. E. HOVEY: Its perusal will set us all to fighting our battles over again.

COL. E. R. ROE: Your description of the battle of the Cache is perfect as a photograph. It is truthful, graphic and most thrilling.

JUDGE BENJ. OLIN: The book is replete with graphic descriptions of camp life, army incidents, and battle scenes.

GEN. I. H. ELLIOTT: I think it exceedingly well written, and a faithful portraiture of the experiences of the 33d.

CAPT. J. H. BURNHAM: It seems to me that your work is a success, from every point of view.

CAPT. C. A. HILL: It is the most vivid picture of the real life of the volunteer soldier—the best I have seen.

E. M. PIKE: I prize the book far above a money consideration.

SETH TURNER: I believe the average boy will learn more of the real history of the Rebellion by reading it, than by a six months' term at the text books.

HON. HENRY SNAPP: A copy ought to be found in every family in the land. It will do good.

HON. JOHN REID: I think the book will be very popular among old soldiers and young men of military inclinations.

HON. J. W. FIFER: My interest in the book did not abate from first to last; I unhesitatingly pronounced it one of the most interesting stories I ever read.

ROBT. CLOW, Circuit Clerk, Will Co.: Any one commencing to read in can scarcely lay it aside until the last page is read.

E. C. HAGER: In language, it is plain and simple; in interest, intense and absorbing.

CAPT. EGBERT PHELPS: I have not yet seen a portfolio of word pictures portraying the army life of a private soldier in such vivid and life-like manner.

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### WHAT THE NEWSPAPERS SAY.

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Joliet Daily News: It is like a panorama.

Ottawa Republican: It is well worth any person's perusal.

Braidwood Siftings: The book is very interesting.

Chicago Evening Journal: The volume is full of incidents, anecdotes and adventures. The general reader will find the work quite interesting.

Joliet Republic-Sun: The book abounds in graphic descriptions.

Joliet Press: It touches many tender chords, many times excites mirth, and many times brings the tears.

Morris Herald: The book will be of interest to all who took part in the war, or had friends engaged therein.

Ottawa Journal: "Army Life" is replete with graphic descriptions of many battles, witnessed and experienced by the author.

Joliet Record: The book is well written, and will be read with interest by all old soldiers, and by people generally.

Ottawa Daily Times: It is in many respects the strongest portrayal of the private soldier life yet written. It breathes patriotism on every page, and every growing boy in the land should read it.

The Globe: "Army Life" is receiving high praises from all quarters.

Chicago Inter-Ocean: It is as good an epitome of every day life in the army as we have at any time read.

Joliet News: When the pages haunt us for days after perusal, we consider it the best indication of an entertaining book.

Joliet Signal: It is replete with pleasing reminiscences, given in an easy style, that does great credit to the author.

Chicago Daily News: It is a picture of a private soldier's army life, and is told in a simple yet graphic style. The plain but feeling manner in which Mr. Marshall narrates his story tells how near his heart was to his pen when he wrote it.

Bloomington Bulletin: The book is a description of the life of a private soldier, from 1861 to 1864, and is full of incidents.

Wilmington Advocate: It carried us right back twenty years.

Ottawa Free-Trader: The book is one of uncommon interest.

Lockport Phoenix: The scenes in "Army Life" are so well painted that the reader can fully understand every feature.

Bloomington Leader: It contains many interesting anecdotes.

Peotone Advance: The book should be in every soldier's library, as well as others.

Chicago Legal News: It is the story of an intelligent private soldier, written by himself at the time, in an amusing and entertaining style.

Chicago Times: To the citizen, to the student of history, and, indirectly, to the politician, it offers much reading of interest. It is a volume that will hold the reader's interest closely.

Bloomington Pantagraph: It is a valuable addition to the his-

tory of the war, because it tells the story of a soldier's life just as it happened, in the language and thoughts of the private soldier.

Marseilles Register: Charming and thrilling from beginning to end.

Naperville Clarion: Every family ought to have one.

Kankakee Gazette: More interesting than any novel ever written.

Kendall County Record: One of the most truthful and entertaining war books yet published.

Morris Daily News: A practicable work, written in a practicable and highly interesting manner by a practicable man of much literary and intellectual breadth.

Marseilles Plaindealer: We have yet to see a more glowing and graphic record.

Washington National Tribune: One of the most interesting and valuable contributions that has yet been made to the literature of the war.

Chicago Tribune: His description of the battles and sieges he and his comrades fought are graphic and eloquent.

Marshalltown Times-Republican: There is not a more readable book published.

Louisville Courier-Journal: A well told story, of what a soldier saw and did.

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JOLIET, Ill., Oct. 1, 1886.

*To the Reader:* It has been said that one of the best ways of becoming acquainted with a man is to read what he has written. If, after reading these detached pages of "Army Life" you feel free to speak a good word for me as a candidate for County Judge, at the coming election, I will be much pleased. If you do not, I still desire to extend the hand of friendship to one and all of my Will County friends. If elected, I will be much pleased; if defeated, I shall not waste any time in idle regrets.

Yours Respectfully,

ALBERT O. MARSHALL.















